

FIFTY FAMOUS FIGHTS IN
FACT AND FICTION

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IN FACT AND FICTION*

Selected, and with
an Introduction
by
THE FIRST EARL OF
BIRKENHEAD



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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

SOME explanation is called for by the appearance of this book more than a year after the Earl of Birkenhead's death. Among his literary remains was found a number of papers and notes relating to books he had it in mind to produce. Many of these were mere jottings of facts and references, but "Fifty Famous Fights" was so far completed as to have the Preface already written, and selections made; nothing remained to be done but to gather the material from the sources indicated and this has now been accomplished.

INTRODUCTION

I HAVE never been able to share the self-satisfaction of those who prefer introspection to action. However equally these attitudes may seem to divide the vast globe of experience between them, I agree with the ancient sage who declared the end of man to be an action, not a thought. Nor is my conception of the rôle and purpose of imaginative prose advanced by pursuing the dreary maunderings of psycho-analysts, still less by following a degenerate's self-denudation, or even a mystic's revelations, when I can gallop along the broad highway in the train of bold narrative and high Romance. No inconsiderable portion of my reading leisure has been spent in the company of swashbucklers and pirates, and I have succumbed deliberately and often to the imposture of the detective tale.

I will attempt no prediction now. Yet it seems to me not unlikely that our descendants will declare for pleasure rather than for pain in the realm of fiction, and that those books possess the secret of survival which are clear and kindling, and tell a story plainly and without undue circumlocution. My advice to youth has always been to set out adventurously, and my advice to novelists is the same. Why waste precious time stumbling across misty bogs with self-centred Russian neurotics only to reach the conclusion that life is not worth while. Youth and literature should be confident, and I could desire a worse fate for a man than to be lured into the belief—however otherwise may be his personal experience—that existence is justified, and that courage with confidence can always carry the day.

It must be acknowledged at the outset that of all forms of writing, fiction is the easiest, though for this very reason it must be the most difficult to write well. Unbelievers need but attempt the task in order to prove the accuracy of both propositions. Scott was quite right when he said that the danger of De Foe's style was that every hack imagined at once that he could imitate it. Hence, in part, the Niagara of novels which are poured out yearly, and the slender residue when time has checked and chosen. The laurels soon wither upon the bright young brows of the latest pet of the critics, and often the prodigy of the pub-

lishers appears in recent (not even in distant) retrospect, jejune and trashy.

On the other hand it is safe to observe that the unnoticed novel may turn out to be the best. True merit may not conceal itself of *malice aforethought* beneath a bushel: but often it appears lustreless in the glare of fashion. It is a claim implicit in the task of the collector that he can pick out the plums more surely than contemporaries could. He may, no doubt, have to exercise his particular discrimination when assessing living or latter-day competitors, but time will have played the anthologist for him in the past. The waters of Lethe will have flowed over the once green plain and relatively few landmarks will be left sticking up for his attention. And whatever the idiosyncrasies of centuries and the manners and prejudices of the day, this much appears indubitable to the compiler as he gazes back in cool perspective. The beggetter of direct narrative has outstayed the sophisticated and mannered stylist, and the plain story has worn best.

It has been my purpose to select fifty favourite fights in fact and fiction. These have not been quarried out of the gold mines of poetry. Some dividing-line had to be drawn, and combats in verse are excluded. Homer and similar heroic singers are passed by and many a classic broil is perforce left out. Only prose fights are included. Where at times, however, in the "dim dawn" of foreign song, verse is only heightened prose, and metre and alliteration have not fluttered forth into song, there I have again acted arbitrarily and decided in favour of a version in English prose sooner than lose a stirring old-world story.

Ancient fashions of vindicating challenged honour, by duel or combat in the lists, will be found—the courage of the principals atoning for weak logic and mistaken faith—side by side with desperate feats undertaken for the sake of fame.

One other limitation has imposed itself upon my purpose. I have discarded the combat of men in multitudes. Battles between armies make way, therefore, for fights which are individual and hand to hand. In the main, my object was to reproduce the strife and will to win between man and man. So human creatures will be discovered in sparrings and scrimages, even at fisticuffs in these pages. Nor is the inclusion of my daughter Eleanor's "Hey Rube" tussle a concession to paternal piety but a tribute to a quality of narration not in my judgment unworthy of its company here.

Only occasionally when animals or inanimate objects take on human significance under the wand of their creator and become reasoning

beings, have I transgressed my own ruling, if it be transgression, and suffered their inclusion. There will, therefore, be found here from Victor Hugo the legendary vagaries of the cannon which gets loose on board ship and becomes flesh and blood in its struggle with the crew: and Mr. Ollivant's semi-human dog-scrap: and finally I could not resist the appeal of Captain Ahab's duel and death-grapple with the White Whale.¹

Some readers may be inclined to disparage my selection as self-willed. Yet more may arraign it for not being "the best." What selection of mine could be theirs, and what selection of anyone's could qualify for that title? These fights are the harvest of the desultory reading of a preoccupied man of many affairs over many years, and I can only hope that they will inspire others who read them *en masse* here, as they caught and moved me in their individual setting.

From early boyhood I fell a victim to the Great Masters of romantic imagination. It was not that I applauded then or could ever otherwise than deride frothy sentimentalism in life and letters. I have risked some censure elsewhere for reminding adventurous youth of the opportunities which await it. I was blamed, as candid commentators often are, for telling the truth. I do not take naturally to perverted meekness or loose thinking or the shirking of facts, and I resent the exalting of arm-chair theorists into arbiters of conduct in times of crisis. I cannot accept the hypothesis that success awaits the pusillanimous or that nations which bottle up their ambitions will grow to greatness.

War is hateful in its destruction of moral as well as of physical capital. We all know that. The anguish of it has been so branded into recent experience that the world may well refuse to resort again to this backward and inhuman arbitrament, for just long enough, perhaps, to permit the evolution, in the interval, of an enlightened conscience in this respect, reinforced by the development of weapons so lethal that their menace will cow civilization into better behaviour.

In the interval let us not cultivate sloppy and disingenuous self-satisfaction. All the prattle about peace at international tea-parties before 1914 was ineffective except in leaving Right weaponless—but, thank God, not spiritless—when the challenge came. The blind ostriches of pacifism did not avoid, they merely prolonged the horror.

It is because I deplore war and desire to prevent it and know that

¹ To bring this collection up to the even number of fifty fights, the publishers have added to Lord Birkenhead's selection of animal fights the narrative on page 362 of "Gorilla *v.* Lion."

violence does not pay in the long run, that I have counselled preparation. It is, however, because I honour decent national pride and legitimate patriotism, and value life at high pressure and would not disdain the title of adventurer myself, that I conceived the notion of a book which, I hope, will not merely prove to be a mirror held up to the flaming faith and gallantry of the past, but which will yield an atmosphere helpful to valiant enterprise in the future.

Before I was of age I had read all Scott's novels more than once. I had galloped as often with the Three Musketeers from Boulogne, and dived with the Count of Monte Cristo from the Château D'If into the midnight sea; and I cannot but believe, in reference to my own career, that no inconsiderable portion of any success which I may have achieved derives from the impulse of these magicians and the example and emulation of their heroes.

Pursuant to these principles I welcome every reader as a co-adventurer. Let him enjoy in this book and applaud the clash of combative loyalties of men of all races and faiths, told in the words of romancers of all languages and outlooks. For genius and courage may vindicate one bold claim. They at any rate are international. They know no frontiers. Let each of us recapture a while our youth in this company of the brave, and rekindle our spirit at the altar of their deeds.

BIRKENHEAD.

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FIFTY FAMOUS FIGHTS IN FACT AND FICTION

DAVID AND GOLIATH

Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle, and were gathered together at Shochoh, which belongeth to Judah, and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim.

And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and pitched by the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines.

And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side, and there was a valley between them.

And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.

And he had an helmet of brass upon his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass.

And he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders.

And the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron: and one bearing a shield went before him.

And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? Am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? Choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me.

If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us.

And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together.

When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.

Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem-judah,

whose name was Jesse; and he had eight sons; and the man went among men for an old man in the days of Saul.

And the three eldest sons of Jesse went and followed Saul to the battle, and the names of his three sons that went to the battle were Eliab the first-born; and next unto him, Abinadab; and the third, Shamamah.

And David was the youngest, and the three eldest followed Saul.

But David went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem.

And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days.

And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched corn, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to thy brethren;

And carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge.

Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, were in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.

And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him; and he came to the trench, as the host was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle.

For Israel and the Philistines had put the battle in array, army against army.

And David left his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage, and ran into the army, and came and saluted his brethren.

And as he talked with them, behold there came up the champion (the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name) out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words, and David heard them.

And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid.

And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel.

And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?

And the people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him.

And Eliab, his eldest brother, heard when he spake unto the men: and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.

And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause?

And he turned from him toward another, and spake after the same manner: and the people answered him again after the former manner.

And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed them before Saul; and he sent for him.

And David said unto Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him: thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.

And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.

And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock;

And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he rose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him.

Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.

David said moreover, The Lord hath delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the Lord be with thee.

And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail.

And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him.

And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.

And the Philistine came on, and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield went before him.

And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him; for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.

And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.

Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands.

And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.

And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth.

So David prevailed against the Philistine with a sling, and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David.

Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.

And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron: and the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron.

And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines and they spoiled their tents.

And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it unto Jerusalem: but he put his armour in his tent.

And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said

unto Abner, the captain of his host, Abner, whose son is this youth?
And Abner said, As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell.

And the king said, Inquire thou whose son the stripling is.

And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand.

And Saul said to him, Whose son art thou, young man? And David answered, I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite.

I Samuel, xvii.

CHRISTIAN AND APOLLYON

(FROM JOHN BUNYAN'S "PILGRIM'S PROGRESS")

BUT now, in this Valley of Humiliation, poor Christian was hard put to it; for he had gone but a little way, before he espied a foul fiend coming over the field to meet him; his name was Apollyon. Then did Christian begin to be afraid, and to cast in his mind whether to go back or to stand his ground. But he considered again that he had no armour for his back; and, therefore, thought that to turn back to him might give him the greater advantage, with ease to pierce him with his darts. Therefore he resolved to venture and stand his ground; for, thought he, had I no more in mine eye than the saving of my life, it would be the best way to stand.

So he went on, and Apollyon met him. Now the monster was hideous to behold; he was clothed with scales, like a fish (and they are his pride), he had wings like a dragon, feet like a bear, and out of his belly came fire and smoke, and his mouth was as the mouth of a lion. When he was come up to Christian, he beheld him with a disdainful countenance, and thus began to question with him.

APOL. Whence come you? and whither are you bound?

CHR. I am come from the City of Destruction, which is the place of all evil, and am going to the City of Zion.

APOL. By this I perceive thou art one of my subjects, for all that country is mine, and I am the prince and god of it. How is it, then, that thou hast run away from thy king? Were it not that I hope thou mayest do me more service, I would strike thee now at one blow to the ground.

CHR. I was born, indeed, in your dominions, but your service was hard, and your wages such as a man could not live on, for the wages of sin is death, therefore, when I was come to years, I did as other considerate persons do, look out, if, perhaps, I might mend myself.

APOL. There is no prince that will thus lightly lose his subjects, neither will I as yet lose thee; but since thou complainest of thy service

and wages, be content to go back; what our country will afford, I do here promise to give thee.

CHR. But I have let myself to another, even to the King of princes; and how can I, with fairness, go back with thee?

APOL. Thou hast done in this according to the proverb, changed a bad for a worse; but it is ordinary for those that have professed themselves his servants, after a while to give him the slip, and return again to me. Do thou so too, and all shall be well.

CHR. I have given him my faith, and sworn my allegiance to him; how, then, can I go back from this, and not be hanged as a traitor?

APOL. Thou didst the same to me, and yet I am willing to pass by all, if now thou wilt yet turn again and go back.

CHR. What I promised thee was in my nonage; and, besides, I count the Prince under whose banner now I stand is able to absolve me; yea, and to pardon also what I did as to my compliance with thee; and besides, O thou destroying Apollyon, to speak truth, I like his service, his wages, his servants, his government, his company, his country, better than thine; and therefore leave off to persuade me further: I am his servant, and I will follow him.

APOL. Consider again, when thou art in cool blood, what thou art like to meet with in the way that thou goest. Thou knowest that, for the most part, his servants come to an ill end, because they are transgressors against me and my ways. How many of them have been put to shameful deaths?—And besides, thou countest his service better than mine, whereas he never came yet from the place where he is, to deliver any that served him out of my hands: but, as for me, how many times, as all the world very well knows, have I delivered, either by power or fraud, those that have faithfully served me, from him and his, though taken by them: and so I will deliver thee.

CHR. His forbearing at present to deliver them is on purpose to try their love, whether they will cleave to him to the end: and as for the ill end thou sayest they come to, that is most glorious in their account: for, for present deliverance, they do not much expect it; for they stay for their glory, and then they shall have it, when their Prince comes in his and the glory of the angels.

APOL. Thou hast already been unfaithful in thy service to him; and how dost thou think to receive wages of him?

CHR. Wherein, O Apollyon, have I been unfaithful to him?

APOL. Thou didst faint at first setting out, when thou wast almost choked in the gulf of Despond; thou didst attempt wrong ways to be

rid of thy burden, whereas thou shouldest have stayed till thy Prince had taken it off: thou didst sinfully sleep, and lose thy choice thing: thou wast also almost persuaded to go back at the sight of the lions: and, when thou talkest of thy journey, and of what thou hast heard and seen, thou art inwardly desirous of vain-glory in all that thou sayest or doest.

CHR. All this is true, and much more which thou hast left out: but the Prince, whom I serve and honour, is merciful and ready to forgive. But, besides, these infirmities possessed me in thy country: for there I sucked them in, and I have groaned under them, being sorry for them, and have obtained pardon of my Prince.

Then Apollyon broke out into a grievous rage, saying, I am an enemy to this Prince: I hate his person, his laws, and people. I am come out on purpose to withstand thee.

CHR. Apollyon, beware what you do; for I am in the King's highway, the way of holiness; therefore take heed to yourself.

Then Apollyon straddled quite over the whole breadth of the way, and said, I am void of fear in this matter; prepare thyself to die; for I swear by my infernal den that thou shalt go no further: here will I spill thy soul.

And with that he threw a flaming dart at his breast; but Christian had a shield in his hand, with which he caught it, and so prevented the danger of that.

Then did Christian draw; for he saw it was time to bestir him; and Apollyon as fast made at him, throwing darts as thick as hail; by the which, notwithstanding all that Christian could do to avoid it, Apollyon wounded him in his head, his hand, and foot. This made Christian give a little back; Apollyon, therefore, followed his work amain, and Christian again took courage, and resisted as manfully as he could. This sore combat lasted for about half a day, even till Christian was almost quite spent: for you must know that Christian, by reason of his wounds, must needs grow weaker and weaker.

Then Apollyon, espying his opportunity, began to gather up close to Christian, and, wrestling with him, gave him a dreadful fall; and with that Christian's sword flew out of his hand. Then said Apollyon, I am sure of thee now: and with that he almost pressed him to death; so that Christian began to despair of life. But, as God would have it, while Apollyon was fetching his last blow, thereby to make a full end of this good man, Christian nimbly reached out his hand for his sword, and caught it, saying, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy! when

I fall, I shall arise"; and with that gave him a deadly thrust, which made him give back as one that had received his mortal wound. Christian perceiving that, made at him again, saying, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us"; and with that Apollyon spread forth his dragon's wings and sped him away, that Christian saw him no more.

In this combat no man can imagine, unless he had seen and heard, as I did, what yelling and hideous roaring Apollyon made all the time of the fight: he "spake like a dragon": and, on the other side, what sighs and groans burst from Christian's heart. I never saw him all the while give so much as one pleasant look, till he perceived he had wounded Apollyon with his two-edged sword: then indeed he did smile and look upward! but it was the dreadfullest sight that ever I saw.

So when the battle was over, Christian said, I will here give thanks to him that hath delivered me out of the mouth of the lion, to him that did help me against Apollyon. And so he did right heartily.

I

THE NOBLE ART OF SELF-DEFENCE

1

CRIBB AND MOLINEAUX

(FROM PIERCE EGAN'S "BOXIANA")

The two great fights between Tom Cribb, Champion of England, and Tom Molineaux, the American negro, are classics in the annals of boxing.

THE day selected for this grand milling exhibition was December 10, 1810, at Cophall Common, in the neighbourhood of East Grinstead, Sussex, within 30 miles of the Metropolis. Notwithstanding the rain came down in torrents, and the distance from London, the Fancy were not to be deterred from witnessing the mill: and who waded through a clayey road nearly knee-deep for five miles, with alacrity and cheerfulness, as if it had been as smooth as a bowling-green, so great was the curiosity and interest manifested upon this battle. About twelve o'clock, Mr. Jackson, with his usual consideration, had the ring formed at the foot of a hill (twenty-four feet roped) surrounded by the numerous carriages which had conveyed the spectators thither, to ward off the chilling breezes and rain which came keenly from the eastward. Immediately upon this being completed, Molineaux came forward, bowed, threw up his hat in defiance, and retired to strip; Cribb immediately followed, and they were soon brought forward by their seconds; Gulley and Joe Ward for the Champion, and Richmond and Jones for Molineaux.

First round.—The first appearance of the young Roscius excited no greater attention than the setting to of the above pugilists; the eyes of the spectators were stretched to their utmost, waiting for the first blow, which, after a few seconds of scientific display, the Moor put in a left-handed hit, but which did no execution. Cribb returned, but his distance was incorrect; however, he made a good stop, and planted a blow with his left hand under the eye of his opponent. A rally now ensued; a blow exchanged by each of them, but of no import, when they closed, and Molineaux was thrown.

Second.—The Moor rallied with a left-handed blow, which did not

tell; when Cribb planted a most tremendous blow over his adversary's right eyebrow, but which did not have the effect of knocking him down, he only staggered a few paces, followed up by the Champion. Desperation was now the order of the round, and the rally re-commenced with uncommon severity, in which Cribb showed the most science, although he received a dreadful blow on the mouth that made his teeth chatter again, and exhibited the first signs of claret. Four to one on Cribb.

Third.—After a short space occupied in sparring, Molineaux attempted a good blow on Cribb's nob, but the Champion parried it, and returned a right-handed hit under the Moor's lower rib, when he fell rapidly in the extreme. Still four to one.

Fourth.—On setting to Molineaux rallied, when the Champion stopped his career by a severe hit in the face, that levelled him, the ground being set and slippery.

Fifth.—The amateurs were uncommonly interested in this round, it was a display of such united skill and bottom, that both the combatants claimed peculiar notice from their extraordinary efforts. Molineaux rallied with uncommon fortitude, but his blows were short. Cribb returned with spirit, but the Moor knocked them off, and put in a tremendous hit on the left eye of the Champion. A rally, at half-arm's length, now followed, which excited the utmost astonishment from the resoluteness of both the heroes, who hit each other away three times, and continued this desperate milling for half a minute; when Molineaux fell from a feeble blow. The Knowing Ones were lost for a moment, and no bets were offered.

Sixth.—The Moor planted a blow upon the nob of the Champion, who fell from the bad state of the ground.

Seventh.—Cribb in a rally gave Molineaux a hit on the side of his head, when he went down.

Eighth.—Cribb showed himself off in good style, and dealt out his blows with considerable success and effect: but experienced from the determined resolution of the Moor that he was somewhat mistaken in his ideas of the Black's capabilities, who rallied in prime-twig, and notwithstanding the severe left-handed hits which were planted on his nob—the terrible punishment he had received on his body, directed by the fine skill and power of the Champion, still he stood up undismayed, and proved that his courage was of no ordinary nature in exchanging several of the blows, till he fell almost in a state of stupor, from the milling his head had undergone. This round was equal to any that preceded it, and only different in point of duration.

Ninth.—The battle had arrived at that doubtful state, and things seemed not to prove so easy and tractable as was anticipated, that the betters were rather puzzled to know how they should proceed with success. Molineaux gave such proofs of gluttony, that four to one now made many tremble who had sported it; but still there was a ray of hope remaining from the senseless state in which the Moor appeared at the conclusion of the last round. Both the combatants appeared dreadfully punished; and Cribb's head was terribly swelled on the left side; Molineaux's nob was also much worse for the fight. On Cribb's displaying weakness the flash-side were full of palpitation—it was not looked for, and operated more severe upon their minds upon that account. Molineaux rallied with a spirit unexpected, bored in upon Cribb and by a strong blow through the Champion's guard, which he planted in his face, brought him down. It would be futile here to attempt to portray the countenances of the interested part of the spectators, who appeared, as it were, panic-struck, and those who were not thoroughly acquainted with the game of the Champion began hastily to hedge-off; while others, better informed, still placed their confidence on Cribb, from what they had seen him hitherto take.

Tenth.—Molineaux now showed symptoms of weakness; but yet rallied and bored his opponent to various parts of the ring. Cribb kept knocking the Moor about the nob, but he seemed to disregard it, and kept close to his man, till they both went down. The Champion now perceived what sort of a customer he had to deal with, and that to win, judgment and caution must be resorted to; he therefore adopted his favourite and successful system of milling on the retreat.

Eleventh.—The Moor, still partial to rallying, planted several blows, but they appeared rather feeble, and did not have the desired effect, but notwithstanding, he evinced strength enough to give Cribb a heavy fall.

Twelfth.—Molineaux, immediately on setting to, commenced another rally, when the Champion put in a severe body blow, but the Moor treated it with indifference, and in return not only milled Cribb's head, but in closing threw him.

Thirteenth.—Molineaux, in boring in upon his adversary, received a severe facer from Cribb, who went down from the force of his own blow. To show the uncertainty of betting, it is necessary to state, that the odds changed six to four on the Moor, to the no small chagrin of those who had sported their money, that Molineaux would not become the favourite during the fight.

Fourteenth.—The Moor went furiously in, and run down Cribb

without striking a blow, or without the latter being able to return one; however, on disengaging, the Champion was levelled.

Fifteenth.—Cribb, on setting to, planted a blow over the guard of the Moor, which occasioned a most determined rally, and those persons who were fond of viewing milling, might now witness it in perfection; no shifting, but giving and taking were displayed on both sides, till Molineaux was knocked down from a severe hit he received in his throat.

Sixteenth.—Rallying still the most prominent feature, but Molineaux went down through fatigue; and Cribb appearing to the best advantage, the odds changed about till they became even, that the Champion would win.

Seventeenth.—Both the combatants determined to do their best, entered most spiritedly into another sharp rally, when they closed, and Molineaux not only gave Cribb a desperate fall, but fell upon him. Betting very shy, if any, it appearing to be anybody's battle.

Eighteenth.—The Champion made play, and planted with his right hand a severe blow on his opponent's body; when Molineaux returned a hit on the Champion's head, who by a blow on the forehead, hit the Moor off his legs, but afterwards fell from the strength of his own blow. Both in an exhausted state.

Nineteenth.—To distinguish the combatants by their features would have been utterly impossible, so dreadfully were both their faces beaten—but their difference of colour supplied this sort of defect. It was really astonishing to view the determined manner in which these heroes met—Cribb, acting upon the defensive, and retreating from the blows of his antagonist, though endeavouring to put in a hit, was got by Molineaux against the ropes, which were in height about five feet, and in three rows. Molineaux with both his hands caught hold of the ropes, and held Cribb in such a singular way, that he could neither make a hit nor fall down: and while the seconds were discussing the propriety of separating the combatants, which the umpires thought could not be done till one of the men were down, about two hundred persons rushed from the outer to the exterior ring, and it is asserted, that if one of the Moor's fingers was not broken, it was much injured by some of them attempting to remove his hand from the ropes: all this time Molineaux was gaining his wind by laying his head on Cribb's breast, and refusing to release his victim; when the Champion by a desperate effort to extricate himself from the rude grasp of the Moor, was at length run down to one corner of the ring, and Molineaux having got his head under his arm, fibbed away most unmercifully, but his strength not being able to the intent,

it otherwise must have proved fatal to Cribb, who fell from exhaustion and the severe punishment he had received. The bets were now decided that Molineaux did not fight half an hour; that time having expired during this round.

Twentieth.—Molineaux made the most of himself, and brought his opponent down by boring and hitting.

Twenty-first.—Cribb planted two blows upon the head and body of his opponent, which Molineaux returned by a desperate blow in Cribb's face; when they closed, and the Champion was thrown. The well-known bottom of Cribb induced his friends to back him six to four.

Twenty-second.—Of no importance.

Twenty-third.—The wind of both the combatants appearing somewhat damaged, they sparred some time to recruit it, when Cribb put in a blow on the left eye of Molineaux, which hitherto had escaped milling. The Moor ran in, gave Cribb a severe hit on the body, and threw him heavily.

Twenty-fourth.—Molineaux began this round with considerable spirit, and some hits were exchanged, when Cribb was thrown. The betting tolerably even.

Twenty-fifth.—The effects of the last fall operated in some degree upon the feelings of Cribb, from its severity; yet the Champion endeavoured to remove this impression by making play, and striving (as in the former round) to put in a hit on Molineaux's left eye, but the Moor, aware of the intent, warded it off, and in return knocked down Cribb.

Twenty-sixth.—Both the combatants trying to recruit their wind and strength by scientific efforts. The Champion now endeavoured to hit the right eye of Molineaux, the left having been darkened for some time; but the Moor warded off the blows of Cribb with agility and neatness, although he went down from a trifling hit.

Twenty-seventh.—Weakness conspicuous on both sides, and after some pulling and hauling, both fell.

Twenty-eighth.—Cribb received a leveller in consequence of his distance being incorrect.

Twenty-ninth.—The Moor was running in with spirit, but the Champion stopped his career, by planting a hit upon his right eye, and from the severe effects of which he went down, and his peeper materially damaged. The fate of the battle might be said to be decided by this round.

Thirtieth.—If any thing could reflect credit upon the skill and bottom of Cribb, it was never more manifested than in this contest, in viewing

what a resolute and determined hero he had to vanquish. Molineaux, in spite of every disadvantage, with a courage and ferocity unequalled, rising superior to exhaustion and fatigue, rallied his adversary with as much resolution as at the commencement of the fight, his nob defying all the milling it had received, the punishment appeared to have no decisive effect upon it, and contending nobly with Cribb right and left, knocking him away by his hits, and gallantly concluded the round by closing and throwing the Champion. The Moor was now convinced that if he did win, he must do it off by hand, as his sight was much impaired.

Thirty-first.—The exertion of this last round operated most forcibly upon Molineaux, and he appeared much distressed on quitting his second, and was soon levelled by a blow in the throat, which Cribb very neatly put in.

Thirty-second.—Strength was fast leaving both the combatants—they staggered against each other like inebriated men, and fell without exchanging a blow.

Thirty-third.—To the astonishment of every spectator, Molineaux rallied with strength enough to bore his man down; but both their hits were of more show than effect.

Thirty-fourth.—This was the last round that might be termed fighting, in which Molineaux had materially the worst of it; but the battle was continued to the 39th, when Cribb evidently appeared the best man, and at its conclusion, the Moor for the first time complained, that “He could fight no more!” but his seconds, who viewed the nicety of the point, persuaded him to try the chance of another round, to which request he acquiesced, when he fell from weakness, reflecting additional credit on the manhood of his brave conqueror, Tom Cribb.

Great events are generally judged of by comparison; and however severe the conflict might have been between Johnson and Big Ben, this battle betwixt Cribb and Molineaux was not only more formidable in its nature, but more ferocious and sanguinary. Fifty-five minutes of unprecedented milling, before the Moor thought he had had enough!!

If anything had been wanting to establish the fame of Cribb, the above conquest has completely decided his just pretensions to the Championship of England. With a coolness and confidence, almost his own, and with skill and judgment so truly rare, that he has beaten his men with more certainty than any of the professors of the gymnastic art. He was called upon to protect the honour of his country, and the reputation of English Boxing,—a parade of words, or the pomposity of high-

flown diction are not necessary to record the circumstance; however, let it not be forgotten, that Tom Cribb HAS DONE THIS and let it be remembered also, that however partial to his favourite system of milling on the retreat, he never resorted to its scientific effects till the necessity of the moment compelled him not to throw away the chance; and that for the first ten rounds of this contest, he was the offensive pugilist, and notwithstanding his game had always been well known, his courage in this instance astonished all the spectators, who expressed their admiration at his being ever ready at the mark fighting his man.

It is but candid to admit, from the excellent specimen which Molineaux portrayed in his contest with the Champion, that the Moor was entitled to another trial; and the plea on which he grounded his fresh challenge, "had not the weather proved so unfavourable," and trusting that "being of a different colour would not operate to his prejudice," was a strong appeal to the liberality of Englishmen, and could not be passed over with indifference by Cribb, who, notwithstanding had publicly declined fighting, accepted of this challenge with alacrity and cheerfulness—in consequence of which, at Thistleton Gap, in the County of Rutland, a few miles from Grantham, and contiguous to three Counties, on Saturday, the 28th of September, 1811, this ever memorable combat took place, whether Old England should still retain her proud characteristic of conquering; or that an American, and a man of colour, should win the honour, wear it, and carry it away from the shores of Britain. Never was the sporting world so much interested, and for twenty miles within the seat of action not a bed could be obtained on the preceding night: and by six o'clock the next morning, hundreds were in motion to get a good place near the stage, which even at that early period proved a difficult task. It is supposed that near 20,000 persons witnessed this tremendous mill: and that one-fourth of them were of the highest mould, including some of the principal Corinthians of the state. Victory proving so long doubtful in the former combat, rendered the capabilities of the Moor an object of fear and jealousy on the part of the friends of the Champion, who viewed him as a rival of the most daring quality, and one not to be disposed of with the common routine of punishment. They neither of them weighed so much as in the last fight by a stone; and Captain Barclay, whose knowledge of the capacity of the human frame appears to be better than most men, took the Champion under his immediate eye, and trained him upon a system peculiar to himself, reducing Cribb from upwards of sixteen stone, to about thirteen stone six pounds, yet kept his stamina unimpaired. From such patronage and

protection the bets were three to one on the Champion and six to four that he gave the first knock-down blow.

A few minutes after twelve o'clock, they mounted the stage (25 feet), Cribb springing upon it with great confidence and bowing to the spectators. The applause exceeded every thing of the kind: the Moor followed and jumped over the railing with considerable spirit, bowing, and was greeted with tokens of approbation, though not of so general a nature. Both the combatants looked well; and Molineaux, for a man of colour, might be termed rather good-looking: but Cribb appeared to have the longest arms. The Moor seemed disturbed and walked the stage with hasty steps. On stripping, the anxiety of the multitude cannot be described; and they were soon brought to the mark by their seconds, Gulley and Joe Ward for Cribb, and Richmond and Bill Gibbons for Molineaux.

First round.—A minute elapsed in sparring, when the Champion made play right and left, and put in a right-handed blow on the body of the Moor, who returned a feeble hit on his opponent's nob. A rally now commenced, in which a few blows were exchanged, and Molineaux received a hit in his throat, which sent him down, though not considered clean.

Second.—The claret was perceived to issue first from the mouth of Cribb, upon commencing this round. A most terrible rally took place by mutual consent, when the Champion planted with his right hand a severe body hit, which was returned on the head by Molineaux with his left flush. They both fought at half-arm's length for superiority, and about six good hits were exchanged, when they closed, and in a trial of strength, Cribb was thrown. Five to two on the Champion.

Third.—In the last rally the right eye of Cribb was almost darkened; and another now commenced equally as ferocious, after sparring to obtain wind, in which it was perceived the Moor was defective, when the Champion put in a most tremendous doubler in the body of Molineaux, and who, notwithstanding he was hit away, to the astonishment of every one, renewed to rally in that determined manner, as to create considerable agitation among those persons who had betted the odds. There was a marked difference in their method of fighting; Cribb hit right and left at the head and body, while the Moor aimed at the nob alone, and with much judgment planted several dexterous flush hits, that impaired the eye-sight of Cribb, and his mouth bled considerably. This rally continued a minute and a half, and in closing the Champion received a heavy fall. The superiority of the Moor's strength was evinced by his

grasping the body of Cribb with one hand, and supporting himself by the other resting on the stage; and in this situation threw Cribb completely over upon the stage, by the force of a cross-buttock. To those not flash, the mere appearance of things appeared in favour of the Moor; but the fortitude of the Champion stayed his friends, although the betting had got down seven to four.

Fourth.—Molineaux's wind could not be depended upon; and the head of Cribb was terrific; and although he was bleeding from every wound, he smiled with confidence, and rallied in the first style of manliness. A number of good blows were exchanged: Cribb milling away at the body, and Molineaux punishing the head. Cribb went down from a trifling blow, and betrayed symptoms of weakness. No variation in the betting.

Fifth.—Molineaux commenced a rally, and the punishment was truly dreadful on both sides; but the Moor had the best of it, and the Champion fell from a hit, and received another in the act of falling, which occasioned some difference of opinion, but the umpires decided it to be correct, as the hands of Cribb were at liberty.

Sixth.—Molineaux from want of wind, lunged right and left, but gained nothing by it, and stopped with neatness the right hand of the Champion. Cribb now gave the Moor so severe a blow in the body with his right hand, that it not only appeared to roll him up, but seemed as if he had completely knocked the wind out of him, which issued so strong from his mouth like smoke from a pipe, that he was literally gasping for breath. On renewing a rally, he behaved quite frantic, and seemed bewildered as to what manner he should conduct himself—afraid of his opponent's punishment, he dared not go in, although wishing so to do, and capered about in an extravagant manner, to the derision of Cribb and the spectators, hit short and was quite abroad; when the Champion pursued him round the stage with great success, and concluded the round by a full-length hit, which laid the Moor prostrate. Five to one on Cribb.

Seventh.—Molineaux quite furious ran in on an intemperate rally, and gained a trifling advantage; but Cribb punished him as severe as can be described, about the neck and jugular; and after the expiration of a minute, the Moor fell from weakness.

Eighth.—Molineaux, still desperate, rallied, but his blows were too short; when Cribb nobbed him in fine style, and fibbed him most dreadfully till he fell, the Champion having got his head under his arm. All betters.

Ninth.—It was so evident which way the battle would now terminate, that it was "Lombard Street to a China Orange," Cribb was the conqueror. The Moor in running in, had his jaw broke, and he fell as if dead, from a tremendous left-handed blow of the Champion. Molineaux did not come to his time by full half a minute—but Cribb wished that the spectators should fully witness his superiority in giving away this chance—dancing about the stage, when he ought to have been proclaimed the conqueror; and went in again, knocking him nearly down, and then up again, and levelled him.

Tenth.—It was with the utmost difficulty that Molineaux could be brought from the knee of his second, and then it was only to add to the severe milling which he had received; but the Moor, still game, made a desperate though unsuccessful effort, and fell from great distress.

Eleventh.—Cribb had given another chance away respecting time, but the Moor was in a state of stupor, his senses having been completely milled out of him; and upon receiving a floorer, he was unable to be got from it—when victory was announced in a sort of a Scotch reel by Gulley and Cribb, elated with success, that the applause was tumultuous in the extreme.

... Such a noise arose
As the shrouds make at sea in a stiff tempest,
As loud, and to as many tunes. Hats, cloaks,
Doublets, I think, flew up; and had their faces
Been loose, this day they had been lost. Such joy
I never saw before.

It appeared in the above battle, that the Moor had acquired science equal to the Champion, and was viewed as good an in-fighter; remarkably quick and weighty with his left hand, and who returned on his opponent's head, whenever he received in the body: but no question now remains concerning the superiority of the combatants—Cribb having won a main, and beat the Moor in nineteen minutes and ten seconds, when in the former battle it continued thrice the duration; which can only be accounted for, that Cribb was too full of flesh in that combat, and not in good condition; and Molineaux had improved respecting science, but injured his stamina. The hardest frame could not resist the blows of the Champion; and it is astonishing the Moor stood them so long. He was taken out of the ring, senseless, and could not articulate; and it was thought upon the first examination that his jaw-bone and two of his ribs were fractured; while, on the contrary, Cribb scarcely received a body blow, but his head was terribly out of shape.

2

THE FIGHT

(FROM WILLIAM HAZLITT'S ESSAYS)

In the following narrative Hazlitt describes how he went into the country to witness a combat between Thomas Hickman, known as the Gasman, on account of his propensity for bragging, and Bill Neate.

THE day was fine for a December morning. The grass was wet, and the ground miry, and ploughed up with multitudinous feet, except that, within the ring itself, there was a spot of virgin-green closed in and unprofaned by vulgar tread, that shone with dazzling brightness in the mid-day sun. For it was now noon, and we had an hour to wait. This is the trying time. It is then the heart sickens, as you think what the two champions are about, and how short a time will determine their fate. After the first blow is struck, there is no opportunity for nervous apprehensions; you are swallowed up in the immediate interest of the scene—but

Between the acting of a dreadful thing
And the first motion, all the interim is
Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream.

I found it so as I felt the sun's rays clinging to my back, and saw the white wintry clouds sink below the verge of the horizon. "So, I thought, my fairest hopes have faded from my sight!—so will the Gasman's glory, or that of his adversary, vanish in an hour."

The *swells* were parading in their white box-coats, the outer ring was cleared with some bruises on the heads and shins of the rustic assembly (for the *cockneys* had been distanced by the sixty-six miles); the time drew near, I had got a good stand; a bustle, a buzz, ran through the crowd, and from the opposite side entered Neate, between his second and bottle-holder. He rolled along, swathed in his loose great-coat, his knock-knees bending under his huge bulk; and, with a modest cheerful air, threw his hat into the ring.

He then just looked round, and began quietly to undress; when from the other side there was a similar rush and an opening made, and the Gas-man came forward with a conscious air of anticipated triumph, too much like the cock-of-the-walk. He strutted about more than became a hero, sucked oranges with a supercilious air, and threw away the skin with a toss of his head, and went up and looked at Neate, which was an act of supererogation. The only sensible thing he did was, as he strode away from the modern Ajax, to fling out his arms, as if he wanted to try whether they would do their work that day.

By this time they had stripped, and presented a strong contrast in appearance. If Neate was like Ajax, "with Atlantean shoulders, fit to bear" the pugilistic reputation of all Bristol, Hickman might be compared to Diomed, light, vigorous, elastic, and his back glistened in the sun, as he moved about, like a panther's hide. There was now a dead pause—attention was awe-struck. Who at that moment, big with a great event, did not draw his breath short—did not feel his heart throb? All was ready. They tossed up for the sun, and the Gas-man won. They were led up to the *scratch*—shook hands, and went at it.

In the first round every one thought it was all over. After making play for a short time, the Gas-man flew at his adversary like a tiger, struck five blows in as many seconds, three first, and then following him as he staggered back, two more, right and left, and down he fell, a mighty ruin. There was a shout, and I said, "There is no standing this." Neate seemed like a lifeless lump of flesh and bone, round which the Gas-man's blows played with the rapidity of electricity or lightning, and you imagined he would only be lifted up to be knocked down again. It was as if Hickman held a sword or a fire in that right hand of his, and directed it against an unarmed body.

They met again, and Neate seemed, not cowed, but particularly cautious. I saw his teeth clenched together and his brows knit close against the sun. He held out both his arms at full length straight before him, like two sledge-hammers, and raised his left an inch or two higher. The Gas-man could not get over this guard—they struck mutually and fell, but without advantage on either side. It was the same in the next round; but the balance of power was thus restored—the fate of the battle was suspended. No one could tell how it would end.

This was the only moment in which opinion was divided; for, in the next, the Gas-man aiming a mortal blow at his adversary's neck,

with his right hand, and failing from the length he had to reach, the other returned it with his left at full swing, planted a tremendous blow on his cheek-bone and eyebrow, and made a red ruin of that side of his face. The Gas-man went down, and there was another shout—a roar of triumph as the waves of fortune rolled tumultuously from side to side. This was a settler. Hickman got up, and “grinned horrible a ghastly smile,” yet he was evidently dashed in his opinion of himself; it was the first time he had ever been so punished; all one side of his face was perfect scarlet, and his right eye was closed in dingy blackness, as he advanced to the fight, less confident, but still determined. After one or two more rounds, not receiving another such remembrancer, he rallied and went at it with his former impetuosity. But in vain. His strength had been weakened,—his blows could not tell at such a distance,—he was obliged to fling himself at his adversary, and could not strike from his feet; and almost as regularly as he flew at him with his right hand, Neate warded the blow, or drew back out of its reach, and felled him with the return of his left. There was little cautious sparring—no half-hits—no tapping and trifling, none of the *petit-maitreship* of the art—they were almost all knock-down blows:—the fight was a good stand-up fight.

The wonder was the half-minute time. If there had been a minute or more allowed between each round, it would have been intelligible how they should by degrees recover strength and resolution; but to see two men smashed to the ground, smeared with gore, stunned, senseless, the breath beaten out of their bodies; and then, before you recover from the shock, to see them rise up with new strength and courage, stand steady to inflict or receive mortal offence, and rush upon each other “like two clouds over the Caspian”—this is the most astonishing thing of all:—this is the high and heroic state of man!

From this time forward the event became more certain every round; and about the twelfth it seemed as if it must have been over. Hickman generally stood with his back to me; but in the scuffle, he had changed positions, and Neate just then made a tremendous lunge at him, and hit him full in the face. It was doubtful whether he would fall backwards or forwards; he hung suspended for a second or two, and then fell back, throwing his hands in the air, and with his face lifted up to the sky.

I never saw anything more terrific than his aspect just before he fell. All traces of life, of natural expression, were gone from him. His face was like a human skull, a death’s head, spouting blood. The

eyes were filled with blood, the nose streamed with blood, the mouth gaped blood. He was not like an actual man, but like a preternatural, spectral appearance, or like one of the figures in Dante's *Inferno*. Yet he fought on after this for several rounds, still striking the first desperate blow, and Neate standing on the defensive, and using the same cautious guard to the last, as if he had still all his work to do; and it was not till the Gas-man was so stunned in the seventeenth or eighteenth round, that his senses forsook him, and he could not come to time, that the battle was declared over.¹

Ye who despise the Fancy, do something to show as much *pluck*, or as much self-possession as this, before you assume a superiority which you have never given a single proof of by any one action in the whole course of your lives!

When the Gas-man came to himself, the first words he uttered were, "Where am I? What is the matter?" "Nothing is the matter, Tom,—you have lost the battle, but you are the bravest man alive." And Jackson whispered to him, "I am collecting a purse for you, Tom."—Vain sounds, and unheard at that moment! Neate instantly went up and shook him cordially by the hand, and seeing some old acquaintance began to flourish with his fists, calling out, "Ah, you always said I couldn't fight—What do you think now?" But all in good humour, and without any appearance of arrogance; only it was evident Bill Neate was pleased that he had won the fight. When it was over, I asked Cribb if he did not think it was a good one? He said, "*Pretty well!*" The carrier pigeons now mounted into the air, and one of them flew with the news of her husband's victory to the bosom of Mrs. Neate. Alas, for Mrs. Hickman!

¹ Scroggins said of the Gas-man, that he thought he was a man of that courage, that if his hands were cut off, he would still fight on with the stumps—like that of Widrigton,—

——"In doleful dumps,
Who, when his legs were smitten off,
Still fought upon his stumps."

THE SMITH'S LAST BATTLE

(FROM CONAN DOYLE'S "RODNEY STONE")

Sir Charles Tregellis had arranged a boxing-match for a wager between his nominee and Crab Wilson, the protégé of Sir Lothian Hume. Tregellis chose as his representative young James Harrison, who had never yet fought a big fight, but was the nephew of the famous Champion Harrison, by whom he had been taught the noble art. Excitement waxed high over the contest, which was fixed to take place on Crawley Downs, but on the night before, Harrison disappeared from his training quarters, and foul play was suspected. On the appointed day an enormous crowd gathered at the ring-side, but there were still no signs of the missing man, and the match would have been forfeit had not an old black hat suddenly floated over the heads of the people, and flickered down within the ropes.

OUT of the whole of that vast multitude I was one of the very few who had observed whence it was that this black hat, skimming so opportunely over the ropes, had come. I have already remarked that when we looked around us there had been a single gig travelling very rapidly upon the southern road. My uncle's eyes had rested upon it, but his attention had been drawn away by the discussion between Sir Lothian Hume and the referee upon the question of time. For my own part, I had been so struck by the furious manner in which these belated travellers were approaching, that I had continued to watch them with all sorts of vague hopes within me, which I did not dare to put into words for fear of adding to my uncle's disappointments. I had just made out that the gig contained a man and a woman, when suddenly I saw it swerve off the road, and come with a galloping horse and bounding wheels right across the moor, crashing through the gorse bushes, and sinking down to the hubs in the heather and bracken. As the driver pulled up his foam-spattered horse, he threw the reins to his companion, sprang from his seat, butted furiously into the crowd,

and then an instant afterwards up went the hat which told of his challenge and defiance.

"There is no hurry now, I presume, Craven," said my uncle, as coolly as if this sudden effect had been carefully devised by him.

"Now that your man has his hat in the ring you can take as much time as you like, Sir Charles."

"Your friend has certainly cut it rather fine, nephew."

"It is not Jim, sir," I whispered. "It is some one else."

My uncle's eyebrows betrayed his astonishment.

"Some one else!" he ejaculated.

"And a good man too!" roared Belcher, slapping his thigh with a crack like a pistol-shot. "Why, blow my dickey if it ain't old Jack Harrison himself!"

Looking down at the crowd, we had seen the head and shoulders of a powerful and strenuous man moving slowly forward, and leaving behind him a long V-shaped ripple upon its surface like the wake of a swimming dog. Now, as he pushed his way through the looser fringe the head was raised, and there was the grinning, hardy face of the smith looking up at us. He had left his hat in the ring, and was enveloped in an overcoat with a blue bird's-eye handkerchief tied round his neck. As he emerged from the throng he let his great-coat fly loose, and showed that he was dressed in his full fighting kit—black drawers, chocolate stockings, and white shoes.

"I'm right sorry to be so late, Sir Charles," he cried. "I'd have been sooner, but it took me a little time to make it all straight with the missus. I couldn't convince her all at once, an' so I brought her with me, and we argued it out on the way."

Looking at the gig, I saw that it was indeed Mrs. Harrison who was seated in it. Sir Charles beckoned him up to the wheel of the curricule.

"What in the world brings you here, Harrison?" he whispered. "I am as glad to see you as ever I was to see a man in my life, but I confess that I did not expect you."

"Well, sir, you heard I was coming," said the smith.

"Indeed, I did not."

"Didn't you get a message, Sir Charles, from a man named Cumming, landlord of the Friar's Oak Inn? Mister Rodney there would know him."

"We saw him dead drunk at the George."

"There, now, if I wasn't afraid of it!" cried Harrison, angrily.

"He's always like that when he's excited, and I never saw a man more off his head than he was when he heard I was going to take this job over. He brought a bag of sovereigns up with him to back me with."

"That's how the betting got turned," said my uncle. "He found others to follow his lead, it appears."

"I was so afraid that he might get upon the drink that I made him promise to go straight to you, sir, the very instant he should arrive. He had a note to deliver."

"I understand that he reached the George at six, whilst I did not return from Reigate until after seven, by which time I have no doubt that he had drunk his message to me out of his head. But where is your nephew Jim, and how did you come to know that you would be needed?"

"*It is not his fault, I promise you, that you should be left in the lurch. As to me, I had my orders to take his place from the only man upon earth whose word I have never disobeyed.*"

"Yes, Sir Charles," said Mrs. Harrison, who had left the gig and approached us. "You can make the most of it this time, for never again shall you have my Jack—not if you were to go on your knees for him."

"She's not a patron of sport, and that's a fact," said the smith.

"Sport!" she cried, with shrill contempt and anger. "Tell me when all is over."

She hurried away, and I saw her afterwards seated amongst the bracken, her back turned towards the multitude, and her hands over her ears, cowering and wincing in an agony of apprehension.

Whilst this hurried scene had been taking place, the crowd had become more and more tumultuous, partly from their impatience at the delay, and partly from their exuberant spirits at the unexpected chance of seeing so celebrated a fighting man as Harrison. His identity had already been noised abroad, and many an elderly connoisseur plucked his long net-purse out of his fob, in order to put a few guineas upon the man who would represent the school of the past against the present. The younger men were still in favour of the west-countryman, and small odds were to be had either way in proportion to the number of the supporters of each in the different parts of the crowd.

In the meantime Sir Lothian Hume had come bustling up to the Honourable Berkeley Craven, who was still standing near our curricule.

"I beg to lodge a formal protest against these proceedings," said he.

"On what grounds, sir?"

"Because the man produced is not the original nominee of Sir Charles Tregellis."

"I never named one, as you are well aware," said my uncle.

"The betting has all been upon the understanding that young Jim Harrison was my man's opponent. Now, at the last moment, he is withdrawn and another and more formidable man put into his place."

"Sir Charles Tregellis is quite within his rights," said Craven, firmly. "He undertook to produce a man who should be within the age limits stipulated, and I understand that Harrison fulfils all the conditions. You are over five-and-thirty, Harrison?"

"Forty-one next month, master."

"Very good. I direct that the fight proceed."

But alas! there was one authority which was higher even than that of the referee, and we were destined to an experience which was the prelude, and sometimes the conclusion, also, of many an old-time fight. Across the moor there had ridden a black-coated gentleman, with buff-topped hunting-boots and a couple of grooms behind him, the little knot of horsemen showing up clearly upon the curving swells and then dipping down into the alternate hollows. Some of the more observant of the crowd had glanced suspiciously at this advancing figure, but the majority had not observed him at all until he reined up his horse upon a knoll which overlooked the amphitheatre, and in a stentorian voice announced that he represented the *Custos rotularum* of His Majesty's county of Sussex, that he proclaimed this assembly to be gathered together for an illegal purpose, and that he was commissioned to disperse it by force, if necessary.

Never before had I understood that deep-seated fear and wholesome respect which many centuries of bludgeoning at the hands of the law had beaten into the fierce and turbulent natives of these islands. Here was a man with two attendants upon one side, and on the other thirty thousand very angry and disappointed people, many of them fighters by profession, and some from the roughest and most dangerous classes in the country. And yet it was the single man who appealed confidently to force, whilst the huge multitude swayed and murmured like a mutinous fierce-willed creature brought face to face with a power against which it knew that there was neither argument nor resistance. My uncle, however, with Berkeley Craven, Sir John Lade, and a dozen other lords and gentlemen, hurried across to the interrupter of the sport.

"I presume that you have a warrant, sir?" said Craven.

"Yes, sir, I have a warrant."

"Then I have a legal right to inspect it."

The magistrate handed him a blue paper which the little knot of gentlemen clustered their heads over, for they were mostly magistrates themselves, and were keenly alive to any possible flaw in the wording. At last Craven shrugged his shoulders, and handed it back.

"This seems to be correct, sir," said he.

"It is entirely correct," answered the magistrate, affably. "To prevent waste of your valuable time, gentlemen, I may say, once for all, that it is my unalterable determination that no fight shall, under any circumstances, be brought off in the county over which I have control, and I am prepared to follow you all day in order to prevent it."

To my inexperience this appeared to bring the whole matter to a conclusion, but I had underrated the foresight of those who arrange these affairs, and also the advantages which made Crawley Down so favourite a rendezvous. There was a hurried consultation between the principals, the backers, the referee, and the timekeeper.

"It's seven miles to Hampshire border and about two to Surrey," said Jackson. The famous Master of the Ring was clad in honour of the occasion in a most resplendent scarlet coat worked in gold at the buttonholes, a white stock, a looped hat with a broad black band, buff knee-breeches, white silk stockings, and paste buckles—a costume which did justice to his magnificent figure, and especially to those famous "balustrade" calves which had helped him to be the finest runner and jumper as well as the most formidable pugilist in England. His hard, high-boned face, large piercing eyes, and immense physique made him a fitting leader for that rough and tumultuous body who had named him as their commander-in-chief.

"If I might venture to offer you a word of advice," said the affable official, "it would be to make for the Hampshire line, for Sir James Ford, on the Surrey border, has as great an objection to such assemblies as I have, whilst Mr. Merridew, of Long Hall, who is the Hampshire magistrate, has fewer scruples upon the point."

"Sir," said my uncle, raising his hat in his most impressive manner, "I am infinitely obliged to you. With the referee's permission, there is nothing for it but to shift the stakes."

In an instant a scene of the wildest animation had set in. Tom Owen and his assistant, Fogo, with the help of the ring-keepers, plucked up the stakes and ropes, and carried them off across country. Crab Wilson was enveloped in great-coats, and borne away in the barouche,

whilst Champion Harrison took Mr. Craven's place in our curricule. Then, off the huge crowd started, horsemen, vehicles, and pedestrians, rolling slowly over the broad face of the moorland. The carriages rocked and pitched like boats in a seaway, as they lumbered along, fifty abreast, scrambling and lurching over everything which came in their way. Sometimes, with a snap and a thud, one axle would come to the ground, whilst a wheel reeled off amidst the tussocks of heather, and roars of delight greeted the owners as they looked ruefully at the ruin. Then as the gorse clumps grew thinner, and the sward more level, those on foot began to run, the riders struck in their spurs, the drivers cracked their whips, and away they all streamed in the maddest, wildest cross-country steeplechase, the yellow barouche and the crimson curricule, which held the two champions, leading the van.

"What do you think of your chances, Harrison?" I heard my uncle ask, as the two mares picked their way over the broken ground.

"It's my last fight, Sir Charles," said the smith. "You heard the missus say that if she let me off this time I was never to ask again. I must try and make it a good one."

"But your training?"

"I'm always in training, sir. I work hard from morning to night, and I drink little else than water. I don't think that Captain Barclay can do much better with all his rules."

"He's rather long in the reach for you."

"I've fought and beat them that were longer. If it comes to a rally I should hold my own, and I should have the better of him at a throw."

"It's a match of youth against experience. Well, I would not hedge a guinea of my money. But, unless he was acting under force, I cannot forgive young Jim for having deserted me."

"He *was* acting under force, Sir Charles."

"You have seen him, then?"

"No, master, I have not seen him."

"You know where he is?"

"Well, it is not for me to say one way or the other. I can only tell you that he could not help himself. But here's the beak a-comin' for us again."

The ominous figure galloped up once more alongside of our curricule, but this time his mission was a more amiable one.

"My jurisdiction ends at that ditch, sir," said he. "I should fancy that you could hardly wish a better place for a mill than the sloping

field beyond. I am quite sure that no one will interfere with you there."

His anxiety that the fight should be brought off was in such contrast to the zeal with which he had chased us from his county, that my uncle could not help remarking upon it.

"It is not for a magistrate to wink at the breaking of the law, sir," he answered. "But if my colleague of Hampshire has no scruples about its being brought off within his jurisdiction, I should very much like to see the fight," with which he spurred his horse up an adjacent knoll, from which he thought that he might gain the best view of the proceedings.

And now I had a view of all those points of etiquette and curious survivals of custom which are so recent that we have not yet appreciated that they may some day be as interesting to the social historian as they then were to the sportsman. A dignity was given to the contest by a rigid code of ceremony, just as the clash of mail-clad knights was prefaced and adorned by the calling of the heralds and the showing of blazoned shields. To many in those ancient days the tourney may have seemed a bloody and brutal ordeal, but we who look at it with ample perspective see that it was a rude but gallant preparation for the conditions of life in an iron age. And so also, when the ring has become as extinct as the lists, we may understand that a broader philosophy would show that all things, which spring up so naturally and spontaneously, have a function to fulfil, and that it is a less evil that two men should, of their own free will, fight until they can fight no more than that the standard of hardihood and endurance should run the slightest risk of being lowered in a nation which depends so largely upon the individual qualities of her citizens for her defence. Do away with war, if the cursed thing can by any wit of man be avoided, but until you see your way to that, have a care in meddling with those primitive qualities to which at any moment you may have to appeal for your own protection.

Tom Owen and his singular assistant, Fogo, who combined the functions of prize-fighter and of poet, though, fortunately for himself, he could use his fists better than his pen, soon had the ring arranged according to the rules then in vogue. The white wooden posts, each with the P.C. of the pugilistic club printed upon it, were so fixed as to leave a square of 24 feet within the roped enclosure. Outside this ring an outer one was pitched, 8 feet separating the two. The inner was for the combatants and for their seconds, while in the outer there

were places for the referee, the timekeeper, the backers, and a few select and fortunate individuals, of whom, through being in my uncle's company, I was one. Some twenty well-known prize-fighters, including my friend Bill Warr, Black Richmond, Maddox, The Pride of Westminster, Tom Belcher, Paddington Jones, Tough Tom Blake, Symonds the ruffian, Tyne the tailor, and others, were stationed in the outer ring as beaters. These fellows all wore the high white hats which were at that time much affected by the fancy, and they were armed with horse-whips, silver-mounted, and each bearing the P.C. monogram. Did any one, be it East End tough or West End patrician, intrude within the outer ropes, this corps of guardians neither argued nor expostulated, but they fell upon the offender and laced him with their whips until he escaped back out of the forbidden ground. Even with so formidable a guard and such fierce measures, the beaters-out, who had to check the forward heaves of a maddened, straining crowd, were often as exhausted at the end of a fight as the principals themselves. In the meantime they formed up in a line of sentinels, presenting under their row of white hats every type of fighting face, from the fresh boyish countenances of Tom Belcher, Jones, and the other younger recruits, to the scarred and mutilated visages of the veteran bruisers.

Whilst the business of the fixing of the stakes and the fastening of the ropes was going forward, I from my place of vantage could hear the talk of the crowd behind me, the front two rows of which were lying upon the grass, the next two kneeling, and the others standing in serried ranks all up the side of the gently sloping hill, so that each line could just see over the shoulders of that which was in front. There were several, and those amongst the most experienced, who took the gloomiest view of Harrison's chances, and it made my heart heavy to overhear them.

"It's the old story over again," said one. "They won't bear in mind that youth will be served. They only learn wisdom when it's knocked into them."

"Ay, ay," responded another. "That's how Jack Slack thrashed Boughton, and I myself saw Hooper, the tinman, beat to pieces by the fighting oilman. They all come to it in time, and now it's Harrison's turn."

"Don't you be so sure about that!" cried a third. "I've seen Jack Harrison fight five times, and I never yet saw him have the worse of it. He's a slaughterer, and so I tell you."

"He was, you mean."

"Well, I don't see no such difference as all that comes to, and I'm putting ten guineas on my opinion."

"Why," said a loud, consequential man from immediately behind me, speaking with a broad western burr, "vrom what I've zeen of this young Gloucester lad, I doan't think Harrison could have stood bevore him for ten rounds when he vas in his prime. I vas coming up in the Bristol coach yesterday, and the guard he told me that he had vifteen thousand pound in hard gold in the boot that had been zent up to back our man."

"They'll be in luck if they see their money again," said another. "Harrison's no lady's-maid fighter, and he's blood to the bone. He'd have a shy at it if his man was as big as Carlton House."

"Tut," answered the west-countryman. "It's only in Bristol and Gloucester that you can get men to beat Bristol and Gloucester."

"It's like your damned himpudence to say so," said an angry voice from the throng behind him. "There are six men in London that would hengage to walk round the best twelve that hever came from the west."

The proceedings might have opened by an impromptu bye-battle between the indignant cockney and the gentleman from Bristol, but a prolonged roar of applause broke in upon their altercation. It was caused by the appearance in the ring of Crab Wilson, followed by Dutch Sam and Mendoza carrying the basin, sponge, brandy-bladder, and other badges of their office. As he entered Wilson pulled the canary-yellow handkerchief from his waist, and going to the corner post, he tied it to the top of it, where it remained fluttering in the breeze. He then took a bundle of smaller ribands of the same colour from his seconds, and walking round, he offered them to the noblemen and Corinthians at half a guinea apiece as souvenirs of the fight. His brisk trade was only brought to an end by the appearance of Harrison, who climbed in a very leisurely manner over the ropes, as befitted his more mature years and less elastic joints. The yell which greeted him was even more enthusiastic than that which had heralded Wilson, and there was a louder ring of admiration in it, for the crowd had already had their opportunity of seeing Wilson's physique, whilst Harrison's was a surprise to them.

I had often looked upon the mighty arms and neck of the smith, but I had never before seen him stripped to the waist, or understood the marvellous symmetry of development which had made him in his

youth the favourite model of the London sculptors. There was none of that white sleek skin and shimmering play of sinew which made Wilson a beautiful picture, but in its stead there was a rugged grandeur of knotted and tangled muscle, as though the roots of some old tree were writhing from breast to shoulder, and from shoulder to elbow. Even in repose the sun threw shadows from the curves of his skin, but when he exerted himself every muscle bunched itself up, distinct and hard, breaking his whole trunk into gnarled knots of sinew. His skin, on face and body, was darker and harsher than that of his youthful antagonist, but he looked tougher and harder, an effect which was increased by the sombre colour of his stockings and breeches. He entered the ring, sucking a lemon, with Jim Belcher and Caleb Baldwin, the coster, at his heels. Strolling across to the post, he tied his blue bird's-eye handkerchief over the west-countryman's yellow, and then walked to his opponent with his hand out.

"I hope I see you well, Wilson," said he.

"Pretty tidy, I thank you," answered the other. "We'll speak to each other in a different vashion, I 'spects, afore we part."

"But no ill-feeling," said the smith, and the two fighting men grinned at each other as they took their own corners.

"May I ask, Mr. Referee, whether these two men have been weighed?" asked Sir Lothian Hume, standing up in the outer ring.

"Their weight has just been taken under my supervision, sir," answered Mr. Craven. "Your man brought the scale down at thirteen-three, and Harrison at thirteen-eight."

"He's a fifteen-stoner from the loins upwards," cried Dutch Sam, from his corner.

"We'll get some of it off him before we finish."

"You'll get more off him than ever you bargained for," answered Jim Belcher, and the crowd laughed at the rough chaff.

"Clear the outer ring!" cried Jackson, standing up beside the ropes with a big silver watch in his hand.

"Ss-whack! ss-whack! ss-whack!" went the horse-whips—for a number of the spectators, either driven onwards by the pressure behind or willing to risk some physical pain on the chance of getting a better view, had crept under the ropes and formed a ragged fringe within the outer ring. Now, amidst roars of laughter from the crowd and a shower of blows from the beaters-out, they dived madly back, with the ungainly haste of frightened sheep blundering through a gap in their hurdles.

Their case was a hard one, for the folk in front refused to yield an inch of their places—but the arguments from the rear prevailed over everything else, and presently every frantic fugitive had been absorbed, whilst the beaters-out took their stands along the edge at regular intervals, with their whips held down by their thighs.

"Gentlemen," cried Jackson, again, "I am requested to inform you that Sir Charles Tregellis's nominee is Jack Harrison, fighting at thirteen-eight, and Sir Lothian Hume's is Crab Wilson, at thirteen-three. No person can be allowed at the inner ropes save the referee and the time-keeper. I have only to beg that, if the occasion should require it, you will all give me your assistance to keep the ground clear, to prevent confusion, and to have a fair fight. All ready?"

"All ready!" from both corners.

"Time!"

There was a breathless hush as Harrison, Wilson, Belcher, and Dutch Sam walked very briskly into the centre of the ring. The two men shook hands, whilst their seconds did the same, the four hands crossing each other. Then the seconds dropped back, and the two champions stood toe to toe, with their hands up.

It was a magnificent sight to any one who had not lost his sense of appreciation of the noblest of all the works of Nature. Both men fulfilled that requisite of the powerful athlete that they should look larger without their clothes than with them. In ring slang, they buffed well. And each showed up the other's points on account of the extreme contrast between them: the long, loose-limbed, deer-footed youngster, and the square-set, rugged veteran with his trunk like the stump of an oak. The betting began to rise upon the younger man from the instant that they were put face to face, for his advantages were obvious, whilst those qualities which had brought Harrison to the top in his youth were only a memory in the minds of the older men. All could see the three inches extra of height and two of reach which Wilson possessed, and a glance at the quick, cat-like motions of his feet, and the perfect poise of his body upon his legs, showed how swiftly he could spring either in or out from his slower adversary. But it took a subtler insight to read the grim smile which flickered over the smith's mouth, or the smouldering fire which shone in his grey eyes, and it was only the old-timers who knew that, with his mighty heart and his iron frame, he was a perilous man to lay odds against.

Wilson stood in the position from which he had derived his nickname, his left hand and left foot well to the front, his body sloped very far back

from the loins, and his guard thrown across his chest, but held well forward in a way which made him exceedingly hard to get at. The smith, on the other hand, assumed the obsolete attitude which Humphries and Mendoza introduced, but which had not for ten years been seen in a first-class battle. Both his knees were slightly bent, he stood square to his opponent, and his two big brown fists were held over his mark so that he could lead equally with either. Wilson's hands, which moved incessantly in and out, had been stained with some astringent juice with the purpose of preventing them from puffing, and so great was the contrast between them and his white forearms, that I imagined that he was wearing dark, close-fitting gloves until my uncle explained the matter in a whisper. So they stood in a quiver of eagerness and expectation, whilst that huge multitude hung so silently and breathless upon every motion that they might have believed themselves to be alone, man to man, in the centre of some primeval solitude.

It was evident from the beginning that Crab Wilson meant to throw no chance away, and that he would trust to his lightness of foot and quickness of hand until he should see something of the tactics of this rough-looking antagonist. He paced swiftly round several times, with little, elastic, menacing steps, whilst the smith pivoted slowly to correspond. Then, as Wilson took a backward step to induce Harrison to break his ground and follow him, the older man grinned and shook his head.

"You must come to me, lad," said he. "I'm too old to scamper round the ring after you. But we have the day before us, and I'll wait."

He may not have expected his invitation to be so promptly answered; but in an instant, with a panther spring, the west-countryman was on him. Smack! smack! smack! Thud! thud! The first three were on Harrison's face, the last two were heavy counters upon Wilson's body. Back danced the youngster, disengaging himself in beautiful style, but with two angry red blotches over the lower line of his ribs. "Blood for Wilson!" yelled the crowd, and as the smith faced round to follow the movements of his nimble adversary, I saw with a thrill that his chin was crimson and dripping. In came Wilson again with a feint at the mark and a flush hit on Harrison's cheek; then, breaking the force of the smith's ponderous right counter, he brought the round to a conclusion by slipping down upon the grass.

"First knock-down for Harrison!" roared a thousand voices, for ten times as many pounds would change hands upon the point.

"I appeal to the referee!" cried Sir Lothian Hume. "It was a slip, and not a knock-down."

"I give it a slip," said Berkeley Craven, and the men walked to their corners, amidst a general shout of applause for a spirited and well-contested opening round. Harrison fumbled in his mouth with his finger and thumb, and then with a sharp half-turn he wrenched out a tooth, which he threw into the basin. "Quite like old times," said he to Belcher.

"Have a care, Jack!" whispered the anxious second. "You got rather more than you gave."

"Maybe I can carry more, too," said he serenely, whilst Caleb Baldwin mopped the big sponge over his face, and the shining bottom of the tin basin ceased suddenly to glimmer through the water.

I could gather from the comments of the experienced Corinthians around me, and from the remarks of the crowd behind, that Harrison's chance was thought to have been lessened by this round.

"I've seen his old faults and I haven't seen his old merits," said Sir John Lade, our opponent of the Brighton Road. "He's as slow on his feet and with his guard as ever. Wilson hit him as he liked."

"Wilson may hit him three times to his once, but his one is worth Wilson's three," remarked my uncle. "He's a natural fighter and the other an excellent sparrer, but I don't hedge a guinea."

A sudden hush announced that the men were on their feet again, and so skilfully had the seconds done their work, that neither looked a jot the worse for what had passed. Wilson led viciously with his left, but misjudged his distance, receiving a smashing counter on the mark in reply which sent him reeling and gasping to the ropes. "Hurrah for the old one!" yelled the mob, and my uncle laughed and nudged Sir John Lade. The west-countryman smiled, and shook himself like a dog from the water as with a stealthy step he came back to the centre of the ring, where his man was still standing. Bang came Harrison's right upon the mark once more, but Crab broke the blow with his elbow, and jumped laughing away. Both men were a little winded, and their quick, high breathing, with the light patter of their feet as they danced round each other, blended into one continuous, long-drawn sound. Two simultaneous exchanges with the left made a clap like a pistol-shot, and then as Harrison rushed in for a fall, Wilson slipped him, and over went my old friend upon his face, partly from the impetus of his own futile attack, and partly from a swinging half-arm blow which the west-countryman brought home upon his ear as he passed.

"Knock-down for Wilson," cried the referee, and the answering roar was like the broadside of a seventy-four. Up went hundreds of curly

brimmed Corinthian hats into the air, and the slope before us was a bank of flushed and yelling faces. My heart was cramped with my fears, and I winced at every blow, yet I was conscious also of an absolute fascination, with a wild thrill of fierce joy and a certain exultation in our common human nature which could rise above pain and fear in its straining after the very humblest form of fame.

Belcher and Baldwin had pounced upon their man, and had him up and in his corner in an instant, but, in spite of the coolness with which the hardy smith took his punishment, there was immense exultation amongst the west-countrymen.

"We've got him! He's beat! He's beat!" shouted the two Jew seconds. "It's a hundred to a tizzy on Gloucester!"

"Beat, is he?" answered Belcher. "You'll need to rent this field before you can beat him, for he'll stand a month of that kind of fly-flappin'." He was swinging a towel in front of Harrison as he spoke, whilst Baldwin mopped him with a sponge.

"How is it with you, Harrison?" asked my uncle.

"Hearty as a buck, sir. It's as right as the day."

The cheery answer came with so merry a ring that the clouds cleared from my uncle's face.

"You should recommend your man to lead more, Tregellis," said Sir John Lade. "He'll never win it unless he leads."

"He knows more about the game than you or I do, Lade. I'll let him take his own way."

"The betting is three to one against him now," said a gentleman, whose grizzled moustache showed that he was an officer of the late war.

"Very true, General Fitzpatrick. But you'll observe that it is the raw bloods who are giving the odds, and the Sheenies who are taking them. I still stick to my opinion."

The two men came briskly up to the scratch at the call of time, the smith a little lumpy on one side of his head, but with the same good-humoured and yet menacing smile upon his lips. As to Wilson, he was exactly as he had begun in appearance, but twice I saw him close his lips sharply as if he were in a sudden spasm of pain, and the blotches over his ribs were darkening from scarlet to a sullen purple. He held his guard somewhat lower to screen this vulnerable point, and he danced round his opponent with a lightness which showed that his wind had not been impaired by the body-blows, whilst the smith still adopted the impassive tactics with which he had commenced.

Many rumours had come up to us from the west as to Crab Wilson's

fine science and the quickness of his hitting, but the truth surpassed what had been expected of him. In this round and the two which followed he showed a swiftness and accuracy which old ringsiders declared that Mendoza in his prime had never surpassed. He was in and out like lightning, and his blows were heard and felt rather than seen. But Harrison still took them all with the same dogged smile, occasionally getting in a hard body-blow in return, for his adversary's height and his position combined to keep his face out of danger. At the end of the fifth round the odds were four to one, and the west-countrymen were riotous in their exultation.

"What think you now?" cried the west-countryman behind me, and in his excitement he could get no further save to repeat over and over again, "What think you now?" When in the sixth round the smith was peppered twice without getting in a counter, and had the worst of the fall as well, the fellow became inarticulate altogether, and could only huzza wildly in his delight. Sir Lothian Hume was smiling and nodding his head, whilst my uncle was coldly impassive, though I was sure that his heart was as heavy as mine.

"This won't do, Tregellis," said General Fitzpatrick. "My money is on the old one, but the other is the finer boxer."

"My man is *un peu passé*, but he will come through all right," answered my uncle.

I saw that both Belcher and Baldwin were looking grave, and I knew that we must have a change of some sort, or the old tale of youth and age would be told once more.

The seventh round, however, showed the reserve strength of the hardy old fighter, and lengthened the faces of those layers of odds who had imagined that the fight was practically over, and that a few finishing rounds would have given the smith his *coup-de-grâce*. It was clear when the two men faced each other that Wilson had made himself up for mischief, and meant to force the fighting and maintain the lead which he had gained, but that grey gleam was not quenched yet in the veteran's eyes, and still the same smile played over his grim face. He had become more jaunty, too, in the swing of his shoulders and the poise of his head, and it brought my confidence back to see the brisk way in which he squared up to his man.

Wilson led with his left, but was short, and he only just avoided a dangerous right-hander which whistled in at his ribs. "Bravo, old 'un, one of those will be a dose of laudanum if you get it home," cried Belcher. There was a pause of shuffling feet and hard breathing, broken by the

thud of a tremendous body-blow from Wilson, which the smith stopped with the utmost coolness. Then again a few seconds of silent tension, when Wilson led viciously at the head, but Harrison took it on his forearm, smiling and nodding at his opponent. "Get the pepper-box open!" yelled Mendoza, and Wilson sprang in to carry out his instructions, but was hit out again by a heavy drive on the chest. "Now's the time! Follow it up!" cried Belcher, and in rushed the smith, pelting in his half-arm blows, and taking the returns without a wince, until Crab Wilson went down exhausted in the corner. Both men had their marks to show, but Harrison had all the best of the rally, so it was our turn to throw our hats into the air and to shout ourselves hoarse, whilst the seconds clapped their man upon his broad back as they hurried him to his corner.

"What think you now?" shouted all the neighbours of the west-countryman, repeating his own refrain.

"Why, Dutch Sam never put in a better rally," cried Sir John Lade. "What's the betting now, Sir Lothian?"

"I have laid all that I intend; but I don't think my man can lose it." For all that, the smile had faded from his face, and I observed that he glanced continually over his shoulder into the crowd behind him.

A sullen purple cloud had been drifting slowly up from the south-west—though I dare say that out of thirty thousand folk there were very few who had spared the time or attention to mark it. Now it suddenly made its presence apparent by a few heavy drops of rain, thickening rapidly into a sharp shower, which filled the air with its hiss, and rattled noisily upon the high, hard hats of the Corinthians. Coat-collars were turned up and handkerchiefs tied round necks, whilst the skins of the two men glistened with the moisture as they stood up to each other once more. I noticed that Belcher whispered very earnestly into Harrison's ear as he rose from his knee, and that the smith nodded his head curtly, with the air of a man who understands and approves of his orders.

And what those orders were was instantly apparent. Harrison was to be turned from the defender into the attacker. The result of the rally in the last round had convinced his seconds that when it came to give-and-take hitting, their hardy and powerful man was likely to have the better of it. And then on the top of this came the rain. With the slippery grass the superior activity of Wilson would be neutralized, and he would find it harder to avoid the rushes of his opponent. It was in taking advantage of such circumstances that the art of ringcraft

lay, and many a shrewd and vigilant second had won a losing battle for his man. "Go in, then! Go in!" whooped the two prize-fighters, while every backer in the crowd took up the roar.

And Harrison went in, in such fashion that no man who saw him do it will ever forget it. Crab Wilson, as game as a pebble, met him with a flush hit every time, but no human strength or human science seemed capable of stopping the terrible onslaught of this iron man. Round after round he scrambled his way in, slap-bang, right and left, every hit tremendously sent home. Sometimes he covered his own face with his left, and sometimes he disdained to use any guard at all, but his springing hits were irresistible. The rain lashed down upon them, pouring from their faces and running in crimson trickles over their bodies, but neither gave any heed to it save to manœuvre always with the view of bringing it in to each other's eyes. But round after round the west-countryman fell, and round after round the betting rose, until the odds were higher in our favour than ever they had been against us. With a sinking heart, filled with pity and admiration for these two gallant men, I longed that every bout might be the last, and yet the "Time!" was hardly out of Jackson's mouth before they had both sprung from their second's knees, with laughter upon their mutilated faces and chaffing words upon their bleeding lips. It may have been a humble object-lesson, but I give you my word that many a time in my life I have braced myself to a hard task by the remembrance of that morning upon Crawley Downs, asking myself if my manhood were so weak that I would not do for my country, or for those whom I loved, as much as these two would endure for a paltry stake and for their own credit amongst their fellows. Such a spectacle may brutalize those who are brutal, but I say that there is a spiritual side to it also, and that the sight of the utmost human limit of endurance and courage is one which bears a lesson of its own.

But if the ring can breed bright virtues, it is but a partisan who can deny that it can be the mother of black vices also, and we were destined that morning to have a sight of each. It so chanced that, as the battle went against his man, my eyes stole round very often to note the expression upon Sir Lothian Hume's face, for I knew how fearlessly he had laid the odds, and I understood that his fortunes as well as his champion were going down before the smashing blows of the old bruiser. The confident smile with which he had watched the opening rounds had long vanished from his lips, and his cheeks had turned of a sallow pallor, whilst his small, fierce grey eyes looked furtively from under his craggy

brows, and more than once he burst into savage imprecations when Wilson was beaten to the ground. But especially I noticed that his chin was always coming round to his shoulder, and that at the end of every round he sent keen little glances flying backwards into the crowd. For some time, amidst the immense hillside of faces which banked themselves up on the slope behind us, I was unable to pick out the exact point at which his gaze was directed. But at last I succeeded in following it. A very tall man, who showed a pair of broad, bottle-green shoulders high above his neighbours, was looking very hard in our direction, and I assured myself that a quick exchange of almost imperceptible signals was going on between him and the Corinthian baronet. I became conscious, also, as I watched this stranger, that the cluster of men around him were the roughest elements of the whole assembly: fierce, vicious-looking fellows, with cruel, debauched faces, who howled like a pack of wolves at every blow, and yelled execrations at Harrison whenever he walked across to his corner. So turbulent were they that I saw the ringkeepers whisper together and glance up in their direction, as if preparing for trouble in store, but none of them had realized how near it was to breaking out, or how dangerous it might prove.

Thirty rounds had been fought in an hour and twenty-five minutes, and the rain was pelting down harder than ever. A thick steam rose from the two fighters, and the ring was a pool of mud. Repeated falls had turned the men brown, with a horrible mottling of crimson blotches. Round after round had ended by Crab Wilson going down, and it was evident, even to my inexperienced eyes, that he was weakening rapidly. He leaned heavily upon the two Jews when they led him to his corner, and he reeled when their support was withdrawn. Yet his science had, through long practice, become an automatic thing with him, so that he stopped and hit with less power, but with as great accuracy as ever. Even now a casual observer might have thought that he had the best of the battle, for the smith was far the more terribly marked, but there was a wild stare in the west-countryman's eyes, and a strange catch in his breathing, which told us that it is not the most dangerous blow which shows upon the surface. A heavy cross-buttock at the end of the thirty-first round shook the breath from his body, and he came up for the thirty-second with the same jaunty gallantry as ever, but with the dazed expression of a man whose wind has been utterly smashed.

"He's got the roly-polies," cried Belcher. "You have it your own way now!"

"I'll vight for a week yet," gasped Wilson.

"Damme, I like his style," cried Sir John Lade. "No shifting, nothing shy, no hugging nor hauling. It's a shame to let him fight. Take the brave fellow away!"

"Take him away! Take him away!" echoed a hundred voices.

"I won't be taken away! Who dares say so?" cried Wilson, who was back, after another fall, upon his second's knee.

"His heart won't suffer him to cry enough," said General Fitzpatrick. "As his patron, Sir Lothian, you should direct the sponge to be thrown up."

"You think he can't win it?"

"He is hopelessly beat, sir."

"You don't know him. He's a glutton of the first water."

"A gamer man never pulled his shirt off; but the other is too strong for him."

"Well, sir, I believe that he can fight another ten rounds." He half turned as he spoke, and I saw him throw up his left arm with a singular gesture into the air.

"Cut the ropes! Fair play! Wait till the rain stops!" roared a stentorian voice behind me, and I saw that it came from the big man with the bottle-green coat. His cry was a signal, for, like a thunder-clap, there came a hundred hoarse voices shouting together: "Fair play for Gloucester! Break the ring! Break the ring!"

Jackson had called "Time," and the two mud-plastered men were already upon their feet, but the interest had suddenly changed from the fight to the audience. A succession of heaves from the back of the crowd had sent a series of long ripples running through it, all the heads swaying rhythmically in the one direction like a wheatfield in a squall. With every impulsion the oscillation increased, those in front trying vainly to steady themselves against the rushes from behind, until suddenly there came a sharp snap, two white stakes with earth clinging to their points flew into the outer ring, and a spray of people, dashed from the solid wave behind, were thrown against the line of the beaters-out. Down came the long horse-whips, swayed by the most vigorous arms in England; but the wincing and shouting victims had no sooner scrambled back a few yards from the merciless cuts, before a fresh charge from the rear hurled them once more into the arms of the prize-fighters. Many threw themselves down upon the turf and allowed successive waves to pass over their bodies, whilst others, driven wild by the blows, returned them with their hunting-

crops and walking-canes. And then, as half the crowd strained to the left and half to the right to avoid the pressure from behind, the vast mass was suddenly reft in twain, and through the gap surged the rough fellows from behind, all armed with loaded sticks and yelling for "Fair play and Gloucester!" Their determined rush carried the prize-fighters before them, the inner ropes snapped like threads, and in an instant the ring was a swirling, seething mass of figures, whips and sticks falling and clattering, whilst, face to face, in the middle of it all, so wedged that they could neither advance nor retreat, the smith and the west-countryman continued their long-drawn battle as oblivious of the chaos raging round them as two bulldogs would have been who had got each other by the throat. The driving rain, the cursing and screams of pain, the swish of the blows, the yelling of orders and advice, the heavy smell of the damp cloth—every incident of that scene of my early youth comes back to me now in my old age as clearly as if it had been but yesterday.

It was not easy for us to observe anything at the time, however, for we were ourselves in the midst of the frantic crowd, swaying about and carried occasionally quite off our feet, but endeavouring to keep our places behind Jackson and Berkeley Craven, who, with sticks and whips meeting over their heads, were still calling the rounds and superintending the fight.

"The ring's broken!" shouted Sir Lothian Hume. "I appeal to the referee! The fight is null and void."

"You villain!" cried my uncle, hotly; "this is your doing."

"You have already an account to answer for with me," said Hume, with his sinister sneer, and as he spoke he was swept by the rush of the crowd into my uncle's very arms. The two men's faces were not more than a few inches apart, and Sir Lothian's bold eyes had to sink before the imperious scorn which gleamed coldly in those of my uncle.

"We will settle our accounts, never fear, though I degrade myself in meeting such a blackleg. What is it, Craven?"

"We shall have to declare a draw, Tregellis."

"My man has the fight in hand."

"I cannot help it. I cannot attend to my duties when every moment I am cut over with a whip or a stick."

Jackson suddenly made a wild dash into the crowd, but returned with empty hands and a rueful face.

"They've stolen my timekeeper's watch," he cried. "A little cove snatched it out of my hand."

My uncle clapped his hand to his fob.

"Mine has gone also!" he cried.

"Draw it at once, or your man will get hurt," said Jackson, and we saw that as the undaunted smith stood up to Wilson for another round, a dozen rough fellows were clustering round him with bludgeons.

"Do you consent to a draw, Sir Lothian Hume?"

"I do."

"And you, Sir Charles?"

"Certainly not."

"The ring is gone."

"That is no fault of mine."

"Well, I see no help for it. As referee I order that the men be withdrawn, and that the stakes be returned to their owners."

"A draw! A draw!" shrieked every one, and the crowd in an instant dispersed in every direction, the pedestrians running to get a good lead upon the London road, and the Corinthians in search of their horses and carriages. Harrison ran over to Wilson's corner and shook him by the hand.

"I hope I have not hurt you much."

"I'm hard put to it to stand. How are you?"

"My head's singin' like a kettle. It was the rain that helped me."

"Yes, I thought I had you beat one time. I never wish a better battle."

"Nor me either. Good-bye."

And so those two brave-hearted fellows made their way amidst the yelping roughs, like two wounded lions amidst a pack of wolves and jackals. I say again that, if the ring has fallen low, it is not in the main the fault of the men who have done the fighting, but it lies at the door of the vile crew of ring-side parasites and ruffians, who are as far below the honest pugilist as the welsher and the blackleg are below the noble racehorse which serves them as a pretext for their villainies.

THE FLAMING TINMAN

(FROM GEORGE BORROW'S "LAVENGRO")

Lavengro is roaming the country as an itinerant blacksmith, and has camped in the dingle.

Two mornings after, I sat by my fire at the bottom of the dingle. I had just breakfasted, and had finished the last morsel of food which I had brought with me to that solitude.

"What shall I now do?" said I to myself; "shall I continue here, or decamp? This is a sad, lonely spot; perhaps I had better quit it; but whither should I go? I have been in the world already without much success. No, I had better remain here; the place is lonely, it is true, but here I am free and independent, and can do what I please; but I can't remain here without food. Well, I will find my way back to the nearest town, lay in a fresh supply of provision, and come back, turning my back upon the world, which has turned its back upon me. I don't see why I should not write a little sometimes; I have pens and an ink-horn, and for a writing-desk I can place the Bible upon my knee. I shouldn't wonder if I could write a capital satire on the world on the back of that Bible; but first of all I must think of supplying myself with food."

I rose up from the stone on which I was seated, determining to go to the nearest town with my little horse and cart, and procure what I wanted. The nearest town, according to my best calculation, lay about five miles distant; I had no doubt, however, that by using ordinary diligence I should be back before evening. In order to go lighter, I determined to leave my tent standing as it was, and all the things which I had purchased of the tinker, just as they were. "I need not be apprehensive on their account," said I to myself; "nobody will come here to meddle with them; the great recommendation of this place is its perfect solitude; I daresay that I could live here six months without seeing a single human visage. I will now harness my little gry and be off to the town."

At a whistle which I gave, the little gry, which was feeding on the bank near the uppermost part of the dingle, came running to me: for by this time he had become so accustomed to me, that he would obey my call for all the world as if he had been one of the canine species. "Now," said I to him, "we are going to the town to buy bread for myself, and oats for you. I am in a hurry to be back; therefore, I pray you to do your best, and to draw me and the cart to the town with all possible speed, and to bring us back; if you do your best, I promise you oats on your return. You know the meaning of oats, Ambrol?"

Ambrol whinnied as if to let me know that he understood me perfectly well, as indeed he well might, as I had never once fed him during the time he had been in my possession without saying the word in question to him. Now, Ambrol, in the Gypsy tongue, signifieth a *pear*.

So I caparisoned Ambrol, and then, going to the cart, I removed two or three things from out it into the tent; I then lifted up the shafts, and was just going to call to the pony to come and be fastened to them, when I thought I heard a noise.

I stood stock still supporting the shaft of the little cart in my hand, and bending the right side of my face slightly towards the ground; but I could hear nothing. The noise which I thought I had heard was not one of those sounds which I was accustomed to hear in that solitude: the note of a bird, or the rustling of a bough; it was—there, I heard it again, a sound very much resembling the grating of a wheel amongst gravel. Could it proceed from the road? Oh no, the road was too far distant for me to hear the noise of anything moving along it. Again I listened, and now I distinctly heard the sound of wheels, which seemed to be approaching the dingle; nearer and nearer they drew, and presently the sound of wheels was blended with the murmur of voices. Anon I heard a boisterous shout, which seemed to proceed from the entrance of the dingle. "Here are folks at hand," said I, letting the shaft of the cart fall to the ground, "is it possible that they can be coming here?"

My doubts on that point, if I entertained any, were soon dispelled; the wheels, which had ceased moving for a moment or two, were once again in motion, and were now evidently moving down the winding path which led to my retreat. Leaving my cart, I came forward and placed myself near the entrance of the open space, with my eyes fixed on the path down which my unexpected, and I may say unwelcome, visitors were coming. Presently I heard a stamping and sliding, as if of a horse in some difficulty; and then a loud curse, and the next moment appeared a

man and a horse and cart; the former holding the head of the horse up to prevent him from falling, of which he was in danger, owing to the precipitous nature of the path. Whilst thus occupied, the head of the man was averted from me. When, however, he had reached the bottom of the descent, he turned his head, and perceiving me, as I stood bare-headed, without either coat or waistcoat, about two yards from him, he gave a sudden start, so violent, that the backward motion of his hand had nearly flung the horse upon his haunches.

"Why don't you move forward?" said a voice from behind, apparently that of a female, "you are stopping up the way, and we shall all be down upon one another"; and I saw the head of another horse overtopping the back of the cart.

"Why don't you move forward, Jack?" said another voice, also of a female, yet higher up the path.

The man stirred not, but remained staring at me in the posture which he had assumed on first perceiving me, his body very much drawn back, his left foot far in advance of his right, and with his right hand still grasping the halter of the horse, which gave way more and more, till it was clean down on its haunches.

"What's the matter?" said the voice which I had last heard.

"Get back with you, Belle, Moll," said the man, still staring at me, "here's something not over-canny or comfortable."

"What is it?" said the same voice; "let me pass, Moll, and I'll soon clear the way," and I heard a kind of rushing down the path.

"You need not be afraid," said I, addressing myself to the man, "I mean you no harm; I am a wanderer like yourself—come here to seek for shelter—you need not be afraid; I am a Roman chabo by matriculation—one of the right sort, and no mistake. Good-day to ye, brother; I bid ye welcome."

The man eyed me suspiciously for a moment, and then turning to his horse with a loud curse, he pulled him up from his haunches, and led him and the cart farther down to one side of the dingle, muttering as he passed me, "Afraid. Hm!"

I do not remember ever to have seen a more ruffianly-looking fellow; he was about six feet high, with an immensely athletic frame; his face was black and bluff, and sported an immense pair of whiskers, but with here and there a grey hair, for his age could not be much under fifty. He wore a faded blue frock-coat, corduroys, and highlows; on his black head was a kind of red nightcap; round his bull neck a Barcelona handkerchief—I did not like the look of the man at all.

"Afraid," growled the fellow, proceeding to unharness his horse; "that was the word, I think."

But other figures were now already on the scene. Dashing past the other horse and cart, which by this time had reached the bottom of the pass, appeared an exceedingly tall woman, or rather girl, for she could scarcely have been above eighteen; she was dressed in a tight bodice, and a blue stuff gown; hat, bonnet, or cap she had none, and her hair, which was flaxen, hung down on her shoulders unconfined; her complexion was fair, and her features handsome, with a determined but open expression. She was followed by another female, about forty, stout and vulgar-looking, at whom I scarcely glanced, my whole attention being absorbed by the tall girl.

"What's the matter, Jack?" said the latter, looking at the man.

"Only afraid, that's all," said the man, still proceeding with his work.

"Afraid of what—at that lad? Why, he looks like a ghost. I would engage to thrash him with one hand."

"You might beat me with no hands at all," said I, "fair damsel, only by looking at me; I never saw such a face and figure, both regal. Why, you look like Ingeborg, Queen of Norway; she had twelve brothers, you know, and could lick them all, though they were heroes:

On Dovrefeld in Norway,
Were once together seen,
The twelve heroic brothers
Of Ingeborg the queen."

"None of your chaffing, young fellow," said the tall girl, "or I will give you something what shall make you wipe your face; be civil, or you will rue it."

"Well, perhaps I was a peg too high," said I; "I ask your pardon—here's something a bit lower:

As I was jawing to the gav yeck divvus
I met on the drom miro Rommany chi——"

"None of your Rommany chies, young fellow," said the tall girl, looking more menacingly than before and clenching her fist, "you had better be civil, I am none of your chies; and though I keep company with gypsies, or, to speak more proper, half and halves, I would have you to know that I come of Christian blood and parents, and was born in the great house of Long Melford."

"I have no doubt," said I, "that it was a great house judging from your size, I shouldn't wonder if you were born in a church."

"Stay, Belle," said the man, putting himself before the young virago, who was about to rush upon me, "my turn is first"; then, advancing to me in a menacing attitude, he said, with a look of deep malignity, "Afraid was the word, wasn't it?"

"It was," said I, "but I think I wronged you; I should have said aghast, you exhibited every symptom of one labouring under uncontrollable fear."

The fellow stared at me with a look of stupid ferocity, and appeared to be hesitating whether to strike or not; ere he could make up his mind, the tall girl started forward, crying, "He's chaffing, let me at him"; and before I could put myself on my guard, she struck me a blow on the face which had nearly brought me to the ground.

"Enough," said I, putting my hand to my cheek; "you have now performed your promise, and made me wipe my face; now be pacified, and tell me fairly the grounds of this quarrel."

"Grounds!" said the fellow; "didn't you say I was afraid? and if you hadn't, who gave you leave to camp on my ground?"

"Is it your ground?" said I.

"A pretty question," said the fellow; "as if all the world didn't know that. Do you know who I am?"

"I guess I do," said I; "unless I am much mistaken, you are he whom folks call the 'Flaming Tinman.' To tell you the truth, I'm glad we met, for I wished to see you. These are your two wives, I suppose; I greet them. There's no harm done—there's room enough here for all of us—we shall soon be good friends, I dare say; and when we are a little better acquainted, I'll tell you my history."

"Well, if that doesn't beat all," said the fellow.

"I don't think he's chaffing now," said the girl, whose anger seemed to have subsided on a sudden; "the young man speaks civil enough."

"Civil," said the fellow, with an oath; "but that's just like you; with you it is a blow, and all over. Civil! I suppose you would have him stay here, and get into all my secrets, and hear all I may have to say to my two morts."

"Two morts!" said the girl, kindling up, "where are they? Speak for one, and no more. I am no mort of yours, whatever some one else may be. I tell you one thing, Black John, or Anselo, for t'other ain't your name, the same thing I told the young man here; be civil, or you will rue it."

The fellow looked at the girl furiously, but his glance soon quailed before hers; he withdrew his eyes, and cast them on my little horse, which

was feeding amongst the trees. "What's this?" said he, rushing forward and seizing the animal. "Why, as I am alive, this is the horse of that mumping villain Slingsby."

"It's his no longer; I bought it and paid for it."

"It's mine now," said the fellow; "I swore I would seize it the next time I found it on my beat; ay, and beat the master too."

"I am not Slingsby."

"All's one for that."

"You don't say you will beat me?"

"Afraid was the word."

"I'm sick and feeble."

"Hold up your fists."

"Won't the horse satisfy you?"

"Horse nor bellows either."

"No mercy, then."

"Here's at you."

"Mind your eyes, Jack. There, you've got it. I thought so," shouted the girl, as the fellow staggered back from a sharp blow in the eye. "I thought he was chaffing at you all along."

"Never mind, Anselo. You know what to do—go in," said the vulgar woman, who had hitherto not spoken a word, but who now came forward with all the look of a fury; "go in apopli; you'll smash ten like he."

The Flaming Tinman took her advice, and came in, bent on smashing, but stopped short on receiving a left-handed blow on the nose.

"You'll never beat the Flaming Tinman in that way," said the girl, looking at me doubtfully.

And so I began to think myself, when, in the twinkling of an eye, the Flaming Tinman disengaging himself of his frock-coat, and, dashing off his red night-cap, came rushing in more desperately than ever. To a flush hit which he received in the mouth he paid as little attention as a wild bull would have done; in a moment his arms were around me, and in another, he had hurled me down, falling heavily upon me. The fellow's strength appeared to be tremendous.

"Pay him off now," said the vulgar woman. The Flaming Tinman made no reply, but planting his knee on my breast, seized my throat with two huge horny hands. I gave myself up for dead, and probably should have been so in another minute but for the tall girl, who caught hold of the handkerchief which the fellow wore round his neck with a grasp nearly as powerful as that with which he pressed my throat.

"Do you call that fair play?" said she.

"Hands off, Belle," said the other woman; "do you call it fair play to interfere? Hands off, or I'll be down upon you myself."

But Belle paid no heed to the injunction, and tugged so hard at the handkerchief that the Flaming Tinman was nearly throttled; suddenly relinquishing his hold of me, he started on his feet, and aimed a blow at my fair preserver, who avoided it, but said coolly:

"Finish t'other business first, and then I'm your woman whenever you like; but finish it fairly—no foul play when I'm by—I'll be the boy's second, and Moll can pick you up when he happens to knock you down."

The battle during the next ten minutes raged with considerable fury; but it so happened that during this time I was never able to knock the Flaming Tinman down, but on the contrary received six knock-down blows myself. "I can never stand this," said I, as I sat on the knee of Belle, "I am afraid I must give in; the Flaming Tinman hits very hard," and I spat out a mouthful of blood.

"Sure enough you'll never beat the Flaming Tinman in the way you fight—it's no use flipping at the Flaming Tinman with your left hand; why don't you use your right?"

"Because I am not handy with it," said I; and then getting up, I once more confronted the Flaming Tinman, and struck him six blows for his one, but they were all left-handed blows, and the blow which the Flaming Tinman gave me knocked me off my legs.

"Now, will you use the Long Melford?" said Belle, picking me up.

"I don't know what you mean by Long Melford," said I, gasping for breath.

"Why, this long right of yours," said Belle, feeling my right arm—"if you do, I shouldn't wonder if you yet stand a chance."

And now the Flaming Tinman was once more ready, much more ready than myself. I, however, rose from my second's knee as well as my weakness would permit me; on he came, striking left and right, appearing almost as fresh as to wind and spirit as when he first commenced the combat, though his eyes were considerably swelled, and his nether lip was cut in two; on he came, striking left and right, and I did not like his blows at all, or even the wind of them, which was anything but agreeable, and I gave way before him. At last he aimed a blow which had it taken full effect, would doubtless have ended the battle, but owing to his slipping, the fist only grazed my left shoulder, and came with terrific force against a tree, close to which I had been driven; but before the Tinman could recover himself, I collected all my strength, and struck

him beneath the ear, and then fell to the ground completely exhausted, and it so happened that the blow which I struck the tinker beneath the ear was a right-handed blow.

"Hurrah for Long Melford!" I heard Belle exclaim; "there is nothing like Long Melford for shortness all the world over."

At these words I turned round my head as I lay, and perceived the Flaming Tinman stretched upon the ground, apparently senseless.

THE MEETING OF SAYERS AND HEENAN

(FROM FREDERICK LOCKER-LAMPSON'S "MY CONFIDENCES")

On Tuesday, April 17, 1860, Tom Sayers, "The Little Wonder," and Champion of England, met John Heenan, "The Benicia Boy," who had come from America to win the British belt. This is how the poet Frederick Locker-Lampson remembered the event, in after years.

I HAVE no idea what kind of an animal Thomas Sayers may have really been in familiar and pacific life, but I had seen enough of him to recognize a remarkable simplicity and steadfastness, and the sight of his grave carried my thoughts back to a memorable spring morning some twenty years ago, and to a merry "mill" in a Hampshire meadow, near a stream, not half a mile from Farnborough railway station.

In imagination I am again at the London Bridge terminus,¹ with a "there and back" ticket in my pocket. The hour is about four in the morning. There is a motley crowd, a huge gathering. There are butchers from Newgate Market; fish-porters from Billingsgate, bringing their vernacular with them; there are pugilists and poets, statesmen and publicans, dandies, men of letters, and even divines, elbowing each other in the semi-darkness.

We have taken our seats. There is considerable delay, but at last a bell rings, there is a snort, and then the monster train slides slowly out of the dimly lighted shed. Once beyond the station we quicken up. Away we tear in a gale of our own creation—a Faust flight on the devil's mantle, over the roofs of the houses, through market-gardens; and, leaving the steeped city behind us, we are soon hissing and snorting through the quiet country; then before very long we find ourselves in a willow-fringed and sunny little field.

For several months I had been confined to London pavements and the dead timber of the official desk. How well I remember the strange delightfulness of the green trees, the fresh grass, cool beneath my feet,

¹ In those days the station for Farnborough.

and the gracious April air as it played upon my face! A lark is soaring and singing far above our heads, rejoicing in his glorious privacy of light; yokels and costermongers are clambering over fences and leaping dykes. And there, the observed of all observers, is the veteran Tom Oliver, superintending the erection of a twenty-four-foot arena.

Sayers was the first to make his appearance in the ring; but when his opponent, Heenan, threw his hat within the ropes, followed it, and stripped, there was a murmur of admiration. He was at once recognized as the most magnificent athlete that had ever been seen in such a place. He was five inches taller than Sayers—who, strictly speaking, was only a middle-weight—some two or three stone heavier, and (no small matter) he was eight years younger; while his length of reach was remarkable for even so tall a man.

Then, shall I ever forget the look of perfect self-possession and calm courage, mingled with curiosity, with which Sayers faced, gazed up, and smiled at, his terrible antagonist? He had never set eyes on him before. Having lost the toss, he was obliged to accept the lower ground. But there he stood, his enormous shoulders shining in the sun, in his well-known and faultless attitude, tapping the ground lightly with his left foot, his arms well down, his head thrown back, ready for a shoot or a jump, and a smile of confidence on his open but not classical countenance.

Still—and no wonder—there was a pretty general opinion among outsiders, expressed in the flowery but forcible vernacular of the “fancy,” that the match was “a horse to a hen”—that “Heenan would knock Sayers into a cocked hat in ten minutes”; for how was Sayers to get at him? I could not but feel the force of this opinion, and that Bob Brettle’s observation was an opposite one: “Well, Tom may beat him, but may I, etc., if he can eat him!” However, as it turned out, Sayers had no difficulty in getting over Heenan’s guard, for he punished him frightfully.¹

I recollect my strange tremor as the men stood up, advanced, shook hands, and took up their positions. The fight began about half-past seven, and finished soon after ten. I am not going to describe it. Has it not been already described in the racy columns of our revered old chronicler, *Bell’s Life*? We have had enough of the “rib-benders” and

¹ He was more remarkable as a fighter than as a sparrer. I have seen boxers quicker than Sayers. Nat Langham and Ned Donally were quicker, and so was Charley Buller; but in force of hitting, either with right or left, and in his extraordinary skill of timing his man, he had no equal. Like Entellus, he defended himself by the movement of his body.

"pile-drivers." I will say, however, that never in the annals of the ring were courage, science, temper, judgment, and staying qualities combined and displayed in such a marvellous measure as by Tom Sayers on this memorable day. He fulfilled to the uttermost Livy's *facere et pati fortiter*. At the beginning of the encounter Heenan was both out-generalled and out-fought; but as early as the fourth round Sayers had his right arm completely disabled, and from that time he defended himself and attacked his gigantic adversary with only his left. The battle ended in a disgraceful scene of riot and blackguardism, especially among the backers of Sayers, who, as soon as they saw that their money was in extreme peril, broke into the ring. It ended by the umpire wisely deciding that it was a draw.

Volenti non fit injuria may be barbarous Latin, but it is sound sense. A boxing-match is a voluntary exhibition of pluck and endurance; there is no malice; and it proves to the uttermost the stuff of which a man is made. There was something in this great fight which the whole nation recognized, for it appealed to a very universal sympathy. It affected all classes, in a way that boys and men always will be affected when they hear of the exploits of a Peterborough or a Grenville. It was magnetic—and why should it not continue to move us? Though, when I recall this battle, and Heenan's face, out of which all that was human had been pommelled, I cry, "Heaven forbid that the prize-ring should ever be revived in all its hideous and loathsome degradation!"

So long as manly sentiments and sheer English pluck are valued, so long shall the name of Thomas Sayers, the Polydeuces of our country, be held in honour.

Dear reader, one of these days make a pilgrimage to Highgate, climb its steep ascent, and enter the rueful-looking, the lonely burial-ground. The custodian will be pleased to see you; he will greet you as he did me, and pilot you to the green resting-place of Michael Faraday, of whom a distinguished man of science well said, "He was too good a man for me to estimate him, and he was too great a philosopher for me to understand him thoroughly." Michael Faraday had the true spirit of a philosopher and a Christian. He was, indeed, one of England's worthiest sons, so it will do you no harm to muse awhile beside his grave.

Then, if by chance you should come upon another grave—a monument of mouldering stones, a forlorn *hic jacet* (it will not be far to seek; you will surely recognize it), you may at once pass on. You need not

stay; but at least have a kindly thought for the plucky Englishman who lies buried there.

The grass on Tom's grave is also very green; and you will be as like to see the lark soaring, and to hear him rejoicing at Heaven's gate, from the one grave as from the other.

Alas, poor Tom! Like most of his calling, he died a young man. I happened to meet him on Hampstead Heath shortly after the battle, and not very long before his death. He was walking alone where John Keats had once liked to walk, in

A melodious plot
Of beechen green and shadows numberless.

We saluted as we passed, and I had the honour of grasping his hand—that fist which had so often administered his terrible blow, “the auctioneer.”

Heenan died much about the same time as Sayers. There is a spice of romance in the story of the gallant Benicia Boy. He was the husband of Ada Menken, a handsome actress, with dark blue eyes—glorious eyes. She was the “Infelicia” whose love poems Mr. Dickens introduced to the reading public in 1868.

I remember seeing Ada at Astley's Amphitheatre in “Mazeppa”; and, from what I have heard, I am inclined to think that, like some other splendid women, she may have been a handful as well as an armful.

BACK-SWORDING AT THE "VEAST"

(FROM THOMAS HUGHES'S "TOM BROWN'S SCHOOL DAYS")

Thomas Hughes, Berkshire man and pupil of Arnold of Rugby, will never be forgotten as the first writer of school stories; but this description of an incident in the Vale of White Horse gives an unforgettable picture of the rough, hearty England of Cobbett and Borrow, tinged with the magic of recollected youth. At the village "veast" or fair the chief interest of the day to little Tom Brown and the old retainer Benjy is the "back-swording"—a local form of single-stick play.

AND NOW, while they are climbing the pole in another part of the field, and muzzling in a flour-tub in another, the old farmer whose house, as has been said, overlooks the field, and who is master of the revels, gets up the steps on to the stage, and announces to all whom it may concern, that a half-sovereign in money will be forthcoming for the old gamester who breaks most heads; to which the Squire and he have added a new hat.

The amount of the prize is enough to stimulate the men of the immediate neighbourhood, but not enough to bring any very high talent from a distance; so, after a glance or two round, a tall fellow, who is a down shepherd, chucks his hat on to the stage and climbs up the steps, looking rather sheepish. The crowd of course first cheer, and then chaff as usual, as he picks up his hat and begins handling the sticks to see which will suit him.

"Wooy, Willum Smith, thec canst plaay wi' he arra daay," says his companion to the blacksmith's apprentice, a stout young fellow of nineteen or twenty. Willum's sweetheart is in the "veast" somewhere, and has strictly enjoined him not to get his head broke at back-swording, on pain of her highest displeasure; but as she is not to be seen (the women pretend not to like to see the back-sword play, and keep away from the stage), and his hat is decidedly getting old, he chucks it on to the stage, and follows himself, hoping that he will only have to break other people's heads, or that after all Rachel won't really mind.

Then follows the greasy cap lined with fur of a half-gipsy, poaching, loafing fellow, who travels the Vale not for much good, I fancy—

Full twenty times was Peter feared
For once that Peter was respected,

in fact. And then three or four other hats, including the glossy castor of Joe Willis, the self-elected and would-be champion of the neighbourhood, a well-to-do young butcher of twenty-eight or thereabouts, and a great strapping fellow, with his full allowance of bluster. This is a capital show of gamesters, considering the amount of the prize; so while they are picking their sticks and drawing their lots, I think I must tell you, as shortly as I can, how the noble old game of back-sword is played; for it is sadly gone out of late, even in the Vale, and maybe you have never seen it.

The weapon is a good stout ash-stick, with a large basket handle, heavier and somewhat shorter than a common single-stick. The players are called "old gamesters"—why, I can't tell you—and their object is simply to break one another's heads; for the moment that blood runs an inch anywhere above the eyebrow, the old gamester to whom it belongs is beaten, and has to stop. A very slight blow with the sticks will fetch blood, so that it is by no means a punishing pastime, if the men don't play on purpose, and savagely, at the body and arms of their adversaries. The old gamester going into action only takes off his hat and coat, and arms himself with a stick; he then loops the fingers of his left hand in a handkerchief or strap, which he fastens round his left leg, measuring the length, so that when he draws it tight with his left elbow in the air, that elbow shall just reach as high as his crown. Thus you see, so long as he chooses to keep his left elbow up, regardless of cuts, he has a perfect guard for the left side of his head. Then he advances his right hand above and in front of his head, holding his stick across so that its point projects an inch or two over his left elbow, and thus his whole head is completely guarded, and he faces his man armed in like manner, and they stand some three feet apart, often nearer, and feint, and strike, and return at one another's heads, until one cries "hold," or blood flows; in the first case, they are allowed a minute's time, and go on again; in the latter, another pair of gamesters are called on. If good men are playing, the quickness of the returns is marvellous; you hear the rattle like that a boy makes drawing his stick along palings, only heavier, and the closeness of the men in action to one another gives it a strange interest, and makes a spell at back-swording a very noble sight.

They are all suited now with sticks, and Joe Willis and the gipsy man have drawn the first lot. So the rest lean against the rails of the stage, and Joe and the dark man meet in the middle, the boards having been strewed with sawdust: Joe's white shirt and spotless drab breeches and boots contrasting with the gipsy's coarse blue shirt and dirty green velveteen breeches and leather gaiters. Joe is evidently turning up his nose at the other, and half-insulted at having to break his head.

The gipsy is a tough, active fellow, but not very skilful with his weapon, so that Joe's weight and strength tell in a minute; he is too heavy metal for him; whack, whack, whack, come his blows, breaking down the gipsy's guard, and threatening to reach his head every moment. There it is at last—"Blood, blood!" shout the spectators, as a thin stream oozes out slowly from the roots of his hair, and the umpire calls to them to stop. The gipsy scowls at Joe under his brows in no pleasant manner, while Master Joe swaggers about, and makes attitudes, and thinks himself, and shows that he thinks himself, the greatest man in the field.

Then follow several stout sets-to between the other candidates for the new hat, and at last come the shepherd and Willum Smith. This is the crack set-to of the day. They are both in famous wind, and there is no crying "hold." The shepherd is an old hand and up to all the dodges; he tries them one after another, and very nearly gets at Willum's head by coming in near, and playing over his guard at the half-stick, but somehow Willum blunders through, catching the stick on his shoulders, neck, sides, every now and then, anywhere but on his head, and his returns are heavy and straight, and he is the youngest gamester and a favourite in the parish, and his gallant stand brings down shouts and cheers, and the knowing ones think he'll win if he keeps steady, and Tom on the groom's shoulder holds his hands together, and can hardly breathe for excitement.

Alas for Willum! his sweetheart, getting tired of female companionship, has been hunting the booths to see where he can have got to, and now catches sight of him on the stage, in full combat. She flushes and turns pale; her old aunt catches hold of her, saying, "Bless 'ee, child, doan't 'ee go a'nigst it"; but she breaks away and runs towards the stage, calling his name. Willum keeps up his guard stoutly, but glances for a moment towards the voice. No guard will do it, Willum, without the eye. The shepherd steps round and strikes, and the point of his stick just grazes Willum's forehead, fetching off the skin, and the blood flows and the umpire cries "Hold," and poor Willum's chance is up for the day. But he takes it very well, and puts on his old hat and

coat, and goes down to be scolded by his sweetheart, and led away out of mischief. Tom hears him say coaxingly as he walks off—

"Now doan't 'ee, Rachel! I wouldn't ha' done it, only I wanted summut to buy 'ee a fairing wi', and I be as vlush o' money as a twod o' veathers."

"Thee mind what I tell 'ee," rejoins Rachel, saucily, "and doan't 'ee kep blethering about fairings." Tom resolves in his heart to give Willum the remainder of his two shillings after the back-swording.

Joe Willis has all the luck to-day. His next bout ends in an easy victory, while the shepherd has a tough job to break his second head; and when Joe and the shepherd meet, and the whole circle expect and hope to see him get a broken crown, the shepherd slips in the first round and falls against the rails, hurting himself so that the old farmer will not let him go on, much as he wishes to try; and that impostor Joe (for he is certainly not the best man) struts and swaggers about the stage the conquering gamester, though he hasn't had five minutes really trying play.

Joe takes the new hat in his hand, and puts the money into it, and then as if a thought strikes him, and he doesn't think his victory quite acknowledged down below, walks to each face of the stage, and looks down, shaking the money, and chaffing as how he'll stake hat and money and another half-sovereign "agin any gamester as hasn't played already." Cunning Joe! he thus gets rid of Willum and the shepherd, who is quite fresh again.

No one seems to like the offer, and the umpire is just coming down, when a queer old hat, something like a Doctor of Divinity's shovel, is chucked on to the stage, and an elderly, quiet man steps out, who has been watching the play, saying he should like to cross a stick wi' the prodigalish young chap.

The crowd cheer and begin to chaff Joe, who turns up his nose and swaggers across to the sticks. "Imp'dent old wosbird!" says he, "I'll break the bald head on un to the truth."

The old boy is very bald certainly, and the blood will show fast enough if you can touch him, Joe.

He takes off his long-flapped coat, and stands up in a long-flapped waistcoat, which Sir Roger de Coverley might have worn when it was new, picks out a stick, and is ready for Master Joe, who loses no time, but begins his old game, whack, whack, whack, trying to break down the old man's guard by sheer strength. But it won't do—he catches every blow close by the basket, and though he is rather stiff in his returns,

after a minute walks Joe about the stage, and is clearly a staunch old gamester. Joe now comes in, and making the most of his height, tries to get over the old man's guard at half-stick, by which he takes a smart blow in the ribs, and another on the elbow and nothing more. And now he loses wind and begins to puff, and the crowd laugh: "Cry 'hold,' Joe—thee'st met thy match!" Instead of taking good advice and getting his wind, Joe loses his temper, and strikes at the old man's body.

"Blood, blood!" shout the crowd, "Joe's head's broke!"

Who'd have thought it? How did it come? That body-blow left Joe's head unguarded for a moment, and with one turn of the wrist the old gentleman has picked a neat little bit of skin off the middle of his forehead, and though he won't believe it, and hammers on for three more blows despite of the shouts, is then convinced by the blood trickling into his eye. Poor Joe is sadly crestfallen, and fumbles in his pocket for the other half-sovereign, but the old gamester won't have it. "Keep thy money, man, and gi's thy hand," says he, and they shake hands; but the old gamester gives the new hat to the shepherd, and, soon after, the half-sovereign to Willum, who thereout decorates his sweetheart with ribbons to his heart's content.

"Who can a be?" "Wur do a come from?" ask the crowd. And it soon flies about that the old west-country champion, who played a tie with Shaw the Life Guardsman at "Vizes" twenty years before, has broken Joe Willis's crown for him.

TARGETT'S PRIZE FIGHT

(BY DAVID GARNETT, IN "A CHATTO AND WINDUS MISCELLANY,"
1928)

NEXT day Jack came back with a parcel of padded gloves for practice bouts, and William and he drove stakes into the orchard and roped them round tidily as a ring. Then the old boxer began giving William lessons. After this all of them at the inn entered on a new kind of life; thus every morning William had to rise at dawn, to throw a bucket of cold water over his back and chest, and then slip on a pair of drawers, and run to the top of the Downs. For breakfast he was given an underdone grilled steak, toast, half a pint of beer, and a raw apple. All of his favourite dishes, crabs, lobsters and pastries, were forbidden him, as were also his glasses of sherry and port and nips of rum and brandy.

After breakfast William had to punch a sack swinging from the branch of an apple-tree, then he had to strip, and finally to box with Jack himself. In the afternoon he had to walk ten miles, and in the evening he was sent to bed at dusk to sleep in a room separate from Tulip. Sambo took the greatest delight in watching his father sparring, though sometimes he would burst into howls if he saw him getting the worst of it. Tom also was interested in the new business his master had taken up, and sometimes he would put on the gloves with him. One hard blow from William would have put an end to all Tom's aspirations as a pugilist for ever, but William spared him. Indeed, he would often tell Tom to hit out his best, and would practise slipping and ducking and stopping the blows, and then would catch him round the neck and swing Tom off his feet, but he never gave him anything worse than a light tap, though that was enough to make the potman's head ring.

In his bouts with Jack there was nothing of this gentleness, for William several times gave the old boxer a knock-down blow, and once cut his lip so badly that they had to suspend their practice for three days. After William had been in training a month Jack said they must fix up

a match as soon as might be. For this purpose, he said, they had best visit Portsmouth, a town which with Southampton has always been a centre of the fistic art, because of the naval men. In particular since Harry Broome, the ex-champion, had taken the Albion Tavern, sporting men were always to be found there. If Targett could not get a backer, he might at any rate find an opponent, and would have opportunities for giving an exhibition with the gloves.

William had no wish to leave Tulip alone; he had indeed made up his mind against so doing, and declared flatly that the match must be made without him, though Jack said it was madness to think he could find any one who would lay down fifty sovereigns on his bare word. But William sticking fast in his refusal, he was forced at last to agree to go himself and try what could be done. "Alec Keane is the man, could we but get him," said the bruiser, "but he is in London, and he will not leave his business for anything but a certainty. His house is the Three Tuns in Moor Street, Soho, and is the highest class sporting house in town, but I doubt if we should get Alec. We must match you at Portsmouth."

Jack set out on this, and was away ten days, going direct to Portsmouth; if failure attended him there, he would try his luck in Southampton, and afterwards if necessary in London. Tulip liked the change in their lives in all but one particular, but chiefly because it meant less coming and going with the village people; William being no longer in the bar, the trade began to fall away of itself. She, like Sambo, loved to watch William exercising himself, and sparring with Jack. For it reminded her of her home, where all alike, youths and maidens, spent most of their time in martial exercises. She never flinched when she saw William struck, no, not even if he were knocked off his legs, for she had been accustomed to much fiercer combats, in which blunt iron-wood cutlasses or wooden-headed spears were used, and ribs were broken. She herself now began to teach Sambo to throw a little harpoon, for William still held to it that his son should grow up to be a harpooner on a whaling-ship.

When Jack had been gone a day over the week, he drove up in a chaise, with two other men, at eleven o'clock one morning. William, in his singlet and drawers, was swinging clubs. He put them down and slipped on his top-coat. A heavily built man climbed out of the chaise, making it rock like a dinghy as he alighted. He was fat but solid, his face huge, the jowl heavy and out of proportion to the rest, but the most striking feature was the nose, long, hooked, twisted a bit to one side, but

springing flush from the forehead it retained traces of the Grecian model. This was no other than the great Harry Broome, ex-champion like his elder brother, the renowned Johnny; both from Birmingham, and the worst hated men in the East End of London.

Jack introduced William, but Broome did not waste time on civilities. His companion was the brave and open-hearted Bob Brettle, likewise of Birmingham. "Well, you're a big 'un," he said with a grin, as he shook hands. William gazed at Brettle with respect, for he knew that only the year before he had matched himself against the greatest pugilist of the world, Tom Sayers. In the seventh round of that contest he had thrown up the sponge, after he had dislocated his shoulder. Since then Brettle had retired from the ring, which made his visit now very much of a surprise. The truth is that he was on a holiday at Portsmouth when Jack arrived, and Harry Broome thought nobody could give William a better trial.

"Come on, boys, don't let's waste time," said Harry, and a move was made immediately to the ring, where Brettle proceeded to peel. The gloves were adjusted and the men tossed for corners; William winning made Brettle face the sun. At first sight it was "a horse to a hen," as William overtopped Bob by six inches, and was proportionately longer in the reach. In height there was less disparity, but Brettle would have been better at a stone less. Bob looked cunning and shifty, and began walking round William with a crab-like motion, William turning round and round and always facing him. After several feints, Bob dashed in and letting fly his left, caught William on the nose, drawing first blood. William planted his right heavily on the mark, and as he was following this up Brettle got down. In the next round Brettle resumed his journeyings round his man and at last rushed in, but this time William countered with a left to the chin, and then going to Brettle held him round the neck with his left hand while he pegged away with his right at Brettle's ribs and eye. It was some seconds before Brettle managed to get down. In the next round Brettle landed a terrific blow on William's nose, drawing showers of blood, and at once fell on his rear end as if from the force of his own blow. William rushed his man in the next round, and after one or two exchanges forced Brettle back by his superior strength on to the ropes, and after pegging away at his ribs caught him in his embrace and threw him, but did not fall on him as he might have done. Brettle was evidently winded by this fall, and in the next round William again held him against the ropes and prevented him getting down while he fibbed away at his eye, and then threw him, falling

heavily on him. This was the last round, and Harry Broome declared himself delighted. The two men washed themselves down, and all adjourned for refreshment.

"I'll back you against Tommy Truckle of Portsmouth," said Harry, "he's always ready to oblige at thirteen stone, and that's about your weight."

The ex-champion ate and drank for two, but Brettle complained of sickness. When he left the room Broome said: "Poor Bob has gone all to pieces. It would be a different story, my son, if he were in training; still you are a big 'un and too strong for him now."

After a hearty dinner the two visitors got into their chaise and drove off. The result of this trial was that Targett was matched against Tommy Truckle of Portsmouth the following Monday at fifty pounds a side, the fight to take place in three weeks' time under the new rules of the P.R.

During this time Targett was kept hidden at the Sailor's Return, and was altogether a dark horse, though the news of his prowess got round to Alex Keane and one or two knowing ones, who decided to attend.

William trained very hard up to the last day, and looked the pink of condition, though very lean. For the last week everything at the Sailor's Return was bustle and confusion. Half a dozen men were in and out of the house all day long attending to William, and Tulip was called hither and thither at every moment, to bring scissors, tape, sponges, towels or sticking plaster while poor little Sambo was made silly by seeing so many things outside his knowledge of the world.

The day before the fight, William and Jack drove off; the meeting place being fixed at Christchurch, half-way between the homes of the two men. Once or twice during the day of the fight Tulip went as far as the cross-roads and looked down the green valley along which William and she had first come to Maiden Newburgh. There was nothing to be seen. Just before sunset, after she had put Sambo to bed, she heard some one on horseback gallop up to the inn. It was Francis Targett, who had been expecting to find William and his companions back already. He shouted out that William had won. Francis had gone off that morning with Dolly's husband towards Christchurch, but soon after they reached Parkstone they had met a large crowd. The Hampshire police had turned up in force at Christchurch, and the sporting men had been obliged to move into the next county. A field was chosen at Parkstone, and they were unloading the stakes, when another

party of blues showed themselves. On this there was a cry of "Cross over the water," and a move was made to the harbour, and a rush made for the boats, which put off with the men and their supporters, leaving most of the crowd on the shore, cursing and swearing, and with them, of course, the police. Francis and Dolly's husband having fresh horses, decided to ride round to the Corfe side of Poole harbour, and at last reached the fight, but not until after it had been in progress for some time. It was held in a field close to the water's edge, and there were not more than three hundred people present, all the Southampton roughs and gipsies having been left behind.

When Francis came up William and Tommy Truckle had fought twenty-one rounds in less than the hour. The fighting was very rough, but William was getting the best of it, and every round ended with Truckle getting down or William throwing him. William was altogether the stronger man, but Truckle was drawing more blood, and William's eyes were closing up. In the fortieth round William fought Truckle through the ropes and gave him a tremendous upper-cut on the chin, and when time was called, George Matheson, who was Truckle's chief backer, threw up the sponge. There were tremendous shouts then, and Francis got off his horse and went to the side of the ring. When he got there he found that William was in great pain and was writhing on the ground. Francis thought somebody in the crowd must have hit him a foul blow, but he did not see it. After some time they helped Truckle and William into a boat and then the whole party went off by water, making a tremendous noise, and just after that a magistrate rode up with a number of policemen mounted, and Francis had ridden off.

When the boy had told this story, he explained again how the road at Parkstone was filled with hundreds of carts and hundreds of New Forest gipsies, mounted on ponies, and shouting, and how all this mob was left behind since there were not enough boats for all, and how the gipsies had pelted the last few boat-loads to push off with stones when they saw that they would be left behind themselves.

The bar was full of men; they pushed towards Francis. As he was telling his story other men came in, and the passage filled. As each newcomer arrived, he asked the result of the fight and the man next him would say: "Landlord has won." Thus they made Francis tell the story over and over again, and at last even Tulip began to see what had happened, though she could not understand the fight, partly because Francis was not able to describe it clearly. But from his words Tulip

got some notion of the field, surrounded with big oak-trees, and the tops of the trees filled with labourers and little boys, the harvesters that had come running from the fields, still with their reaping-hooks in their hands, the boats drawn up at the water's edge, the ring staked out on the mossy turf, and the hollow square of men watching, while in the ring itself a couple of seconds stood in each man's corner and the referee hopped about in a peaked cap and white trousers. "One of Tommy Truckle's seconds was a negro, called Bob Travers, wasn't that a funny thing!" said Francis.

Everybody agreed that it was an odd circumstance, and wondered what William had thought about it when he saw Massa Ebony on the side of his opponent. It was eleven o'clock at night before there was any sign of William, then some one heard the sound of a bugle, and every one left the bar (for the men were still there, drinking and asking Francis questions). A waggonette was approaching, and Tulip heard shouting, singing, and again and again the hoarse notes of a bugle. Harry Broome was on the box, his white beaver over one eye. As he drew up all the men in the waggonette began shouting louder than before. Then they began to climb out and call for drinks.

"Where is William?" asked Tulip, but her question was not heeded. "Well, Tom, my boy, our man won," cried out Jack. "He had the best of it all the way through. But we were lucky the other side threw up the sponge when he did for William was taken with pains in his chest. He says it's his heart, but maybe it's only cramp."

"That old fool Jack trained him much too hard; it nearly lost us the fight," said Harry Broome, in a sober, heavy voice.

"Where is the master?" asked Tom.

"Oh, we brought him along safe enough," said a stranger.

Tom went outside with Tulip. William was lying doubled up on the bottom of the waggonette.

"Come along, some one lend a hand here," cried Tom. Tulip held a carriage lamp. Then two labourers came forward to help, and together they carried him into the inn and upstairs and laid him on the bed. By the light of a candle they could see that his features were swollen beyond recognition, the eyes were closed, the nose was a mass of clotted blood, the gaping mouth a bloody, toothless cavern. Presently he shifted slightly. Tulip took his hand, and Tom went downstairs to the other men.

"Fine mess you've made of my master," said Tom.

"He took his gruel," said Jack, "but you ought to see what he gave

poor old Tommy Truckle. Next time it will be the championship, my boy, and not a penny under."

"Well, I'm off," said Broome, "or I shan't see the missus to-night. Last week I met some old friends, and, well, we made a night of it. There were some sailor boys. Well, when I got home, I'd had nothing to eat, and I went to the larder and there was an apply pie. I ate it. Then I went to bed, and next morning my wife woke me up. 'Where were you last night, Harry?' she asked me. 'Oh,' I said, 'at a dinner; had to meet some people on masonic business.' 'Did you have a good dinner?' she asked. 'Yes,' I said, 'a wonderful dinner, a saddle of mutton, a Scotch salmon.' Well, she never said a word but just went out of the room and came back with the empty pie-dish in her hand. I couldn't answer that, could I? But, boys, we must be off. Give me a leg up, Tommy."

He pinched Tom's ear affectionately as Tom helped him up, the other men were collected, Broome cracked his whip, and they were off. There were a few gurgles from the bugle, then silence.

II

THE AGE OF CHIVALRY

1

THE SLAYING OF GUNNAR OF LITHEND

(FROM SIR J. W. DASENT'S TRANSLATION OF THE "STORY OF BURNT NJAL")

The story of Burnt Njal, the greatest of the Icelandic sagas, contains "Some of the best fighting in literature." Handed down for generations as a local tradition, it is a magnificent example of the art of the ancient story-tellers, working on episodes substantially true.

Gunnar of Lithend, the friend of Njal, is the Bayard of the sagas. A matchless fighter, and owner of a weapon—the famous spear or "bill" to which rumour ascribed magical properties, he was yet a man of peace, greatly beloved. His wife, however, Hallgerda the Fair, was a worthless woman, whose misdeeds embroiled him with the neighbouring chieftains and finally brought about his death.

Now winter leaves the farmyard. At the Thing that summer Gizur the White and Geir the Priest, Otkell's kinsmen, made Gunnar outlaw, and summoned all his foes to plot against him. They agreed to make an onslaught on Gunnar, and shook hands on the bargain, and laid a fine on any that failed. Mord was to watch for a proper time for the attack, and since there were forty men in the league they thought it would be a light thing to hunt down Gunnar, now that Kolskegg and Thrain and two of Njal's sons were away.

Njal went and warned Gunnar. "Now," says Njal, "I would that my son Skarphedinn should come to thy house; he will lay down his life for thine."

"I will not," says Gunnar, "that thy sons should be slain for my sake."

"All thy care will come to nothing," says Njal. "Quarrels will turn where my sons are as soon as thou art dead and gone."

"Still they shall not fall into them for me," says Gunnar. "But this one thing I will ask of thee, that ye see after my son Hogni. I say naught of Grani, for he does not behave himself much to my mind."

Njal gave his word to that. Now it is said that Gunnar rode to all meetings of men and to all lawful Things, and his foes never dared to fall on him.

But next autumn Mord sent them word that Gunnar was at home alone, for his people were finishing their haymaking at the isles. Then Gizur and Geir, and Starkad and Thorgeir, and all those others, met with Mord and took counsel how they best might fall on Gunnar.

Mord said they could not take Gunnar unawares unless they seized his neighbour and made him go with them to lay hands on the hound. So they went and seized the neighbour and gave him the choice, either to lose his life or to lay hands on the hound; he chose to save his life, and went with them to Lithend.

There was a road sunk between fences, above the farmyard, and there they halted with their band. The neighbour went up to the homestead, where the dog lay on the top of the house, and enticed him away to the sunken road. When the dog saw that men were there, he leaped upon the neighbour and tore him open.

One of the band smote the hound on the head with his axe, so that the blade sunk into the brain. The hound gave such a great howl that they thought it passing strange, and he fell down dead.

Gunnar woke up in his hall and said: "Thou hast been sorely treated, Sam, my fosterling; and this warning means that our two deaths will not be far apart."

Gunnar's house was all of wood, roofed with beams, and there were window-slits under the beams, fitted with shutters. Gunnar, Hallgerda, and his mother, slept in the loft above the hall.

When those others had come up to the house they knew not if Gunnar were at home; they sent one man to the house, and the rest sat down on the ground. That man went and climbed upon the hall, but Gunnar sees where a red kirtle passes before a window-slit, and thrusts out the bill. Down topples the man from the roof. Then he goes to Gizur and his band where they sit on the ground.

Gizur looked at him and said: "Well, is Gunnar at home?"

"Find that out for yourselves," said he, "but this I am sure of, that his bill is at home." And with that he fell down dead.

Then they made for the buildings. Gunnar shot arrows at them, and made a stout defence, and they could get nothing done. Then some of them got into the outhouses and tried to attack him thence, but Gunnar found them out with his arrows, and still they could get nothing done. Then they rested a while, and made a second onslaught, and fell off the

second time. Then they made a third bout of it, and were long at it, and then they fell off again.

Gunnar said: "There lies one of their shafts out there on the roof; I will shoot it at them, and it will be a shame to them to get a hurt from one of their own weapons."

His mother said: "Do not rouse them, my son, when perhaps they will leave thee in peace."

But Gunnar caught up the arrow and shot it, and gave one of them a great wound.

"Out came an arm yonder," says Gizur, "and took an arrow from the roof; and they would not look outside for shafts if there were enough indoors. Now ye shall make a fresh onslaught."

"Let us burn him house and all," said Mord.

"That shall never be," says Gizur, "though I knew my life lay on it. But it is easy for thee to find some plan, such a cunning man as thou art said to be."

Some ropes lay there on the ground; they were often used to strengthen the roof. Then Mord said: "Let us fasten these ropes to the carrying-beams of the roof and to these rocks, and twist the ropes tight with levers, and so pull the roof off the hall."

So they took the ropes, and all lent a hand, and before Gunnar was aware they had pulled the whole roof off the hall. He still shot with his bow so that they could not come nigh him, and Mord said again that they must burn the house, but Gizur forbade that.

Just then Thorbrand Thorleik's son springs up on the wall and cuts asunder Gunnar's bowstring. Gunnar clutches the bill and drives it through him, and hurls him down on the ground. Then up sprang Asbrand his brother, but Gunnar threw him down with both arms broken.

Gunnar had already wounded eight men and slain two. He had got two wounds, and all men said that he never once winced either at wounds or death.

Then Gunnar said to Hallgerda: "Give me two locks of thy hair, and do thou and my mother twist them together into a bowstring for me."

"Does aught lie on it?" she asks.

"My life lies on it," he says, "for they will never come to close quarters with me so long as I can shoot with my bow."

"Well!" she says, "now I will call to thy mind that slap on the face which thou gavest me; and I care never a whit whether thou holdest out a long while or a short."

"Everyone has something to boast of," says Gunnar, "and I will ask thee nothing more."

Gunnar made a stout and bold defence, and now wounded other eight men with such sore wounds that most of them lay at death's door; and he kept his enemies off until he fell worn out with toil. Then they wounded him with many and great wounds, but still he got away out of their hands, and held his own against them a while longer, but at last they slew him.

Then Gizur said: "We have now laid low to earth a mighty chief, and hard work has it been, and the fame of his defence shall last as long as men shall live in this land."

After that he said to Rannveig: "Wilt thou grant us earth here for two of our men who are dead?"

"All the more willingly for two," she says, "because I wish I had to grant it to all of you."

"It must be forgiven thee," he says, "to speak thus, for thou hast had a great loss."

He gave orders that no man should spoil or rob anything there. Then they went away.

2

THE DEATH OF KING ARTHUR

(FROM SIR THOMAS MALORY'S "MORTE D'ARTHUR")

THEN much people drew unto king Arthur. And then they said that Sir Mordred warred upon king Arthur with wrong. And then king Arthur drew with him his host down by the sea side, westward toward Salisbury, and there was a day assigned betwixt king Arthur and Sir Mordred, that they should meet upon a down beside Salisbury, and not far from the sea side, and this day was assigned on a Monday after Trinity Sunday, whereof king Arthur was passing glad, that he might be avenged upon Sir Mordred. Then Sir Mordred araised much people about London, for they of Kent, Southsex, and Surrey, Eastsex, and of Southfolk, and of Northfolk, held the most party with Sir Mordred, and many a full noble knight drew unto Sir Mordred and to the king, but they that loved Sir Launcelot drew unto Sir Mordred. So upon Trinity Sunday at night king Arthur dreamed a wonderful dream, and that was this, that him seemed he sat upon a chaflet in a chair, and the chair was fast to a wheel, and thereupon sat king Arthur in the richest cloth of gold that might be made, and the king thought there was under him, far from him, an hideous deep black water, and therein were all manner of serpents, and worms, and wild beasts, foul and horrible, and suddenly the king thought the wheel turned up so down, and he fell among the serpents, and every beast took him by a limb, and then the king cried as he lay in his bed and slept, Help. And then knights, squires, and yeomen awaked the king; and then he was so amazed that he wist not where he was, and then he fell on slumbering again, not sleeping nor thoroughly waking. So the king seemed verily that there came Sir Gawaine unto him with a number of fair ladies with him.

And when king Arthur saw him, then he said, Welcome, my sister's son, I weand thou hadst been dead, and now I see thee on live, much am I beholding unto almighty Jesu. O fair nephew and my sister's son, what be these fair ladies that hither be come with you? Sir, said

Sir Gawaine, all these be ladies for whom I have foughten when I was man living, and all these are those that I did battle for in righteous quarrel; and God hath given them that grace at their great prayer, by cause I did battle for them, that they should bring me hither unto you, thus much hath God given me leave, for to warn you of your death; for and ye fight as to-morn with Sir Mordred, as ye both have assigned, doubt ye not ye must be slain, and the most part of your people on both parties. And for the great grace and goodness that almighty Jesu hath unto you, and for pity of you, and many more other good men there shall be slain, God hath sent me to you of his special grace, to give you warning that in no wise ye do battle as to-morn, but that ye take a treaty for a month day; and proffer you largely, so as to-morn to be put in a delay. For within a month shall come Sir Launcelot with all his noble knights, and rescue you worshipfully, and slay Sir Mordred and all that ever will hold with him. Then Sir Gawaine and all the ladies vanished. And anon the king called upon his knights, squires, and yeomen, and charged them wightly to fetch his noble lords and wise bishops unto him. And when they were come, the king told them his avision, what Sir Gawaine had told him, and warned him that if he fought on the morn he should be slain. Then the king commanded Sir Lucan de butlere, and his brother Sir Bedivere, with two bishops with them, and charged them in any wise, and they might make a treaty for a month day with Sir Mordred. And spare not, proffer him lands and goods as much as ye think best. So then they departed, and came to Sir Mordred, where he had a grim host of an hundred thousand men. And there they entreated Sir Mordred long time, and at the last Sir Mordred was agreed for to have Cornwall and Kent, by Arthur's day: after, all England, after the days of king Arthur.

Then were they condescended that king Arthur and Sir Mordred should meet betwixt their hosts, and every each of them should bring fourteen persons. And they came with this word unto Arthur. Then said he, I am glad that this is done. And so he went into the field. And when Arthur should depart, he warned all his host that and they see any sword drawn, Look ye come on fiercely, and slay that traitor Sir Mordred, for I in no wise trust him. In like wise Sir Mordred warned his host that,—and ye see any sword drawn, look that ye come on fiercely, and so slay all that ever before you standeth, for in no wise I will not trust for this treaty. For I know well my father will be avenged on me. So they met as their pointment was, and so they were agreed and accorded thoroughly. And wine was fetched, and

they drank. Right so came an adder out of a little heath bush, and it stung a knight on the foot. And when the knight felt him stungen, he looked down and saw the adder, and then he drew his sword to slay the adder, and thought of none other harm. And when the host on both parties saw that sword drawn, then they blew beamous, trumpets, and horns, and shouted grimly. And so both hosts dressed them together. And king Arthur took his horse, and said, Alas this unhappy day, and so rode to his party. And Sir Mordred in like wise. And never was there seen a more dolefuller battle in no Christian land. For there was but rushing and riding, foining and striking, and many a grim word was there spoken either to other, and many a deadly stroke. But ever king Arthur rode throughout nobly as a noble king should, and at all times he fainted never; Sir Mordred that day put him in devoir, and in great peril. And thus they fought all the long day, and never stinted till the noble knights were laid to the cold earth; and ever they fought still till it was near night, and by that time was there an hundred thousand laid dead upon the down. Then was Arthur wood wroth out of measure, when he saw his people so slain from him. Then the king looked about him, and then was he ware of all his host and of all his good knights, were left no more one live but two knights, that one was Sir Lucan de butlere, and his brother Sir Bedivere, and they were full sore wounded. Jesu, mercy, said the king, where are all my noble knights becomen? For now, said Arthur, I am come to mine end. But would to God that I wist where were that traitor Sir Mordred, that hath caused all this mischief. Then was king Arthur ware where Sir Mordred leaned upon his sword among a great heap of dead men, Now give me my spear, said Arthur unto Sir Lucan, for yonder I have espied the traitor that all this woe hath wrought. Sir, let him be, said Sir Lucan, for he is unhappy. And if ye pass this unhappy day ye shall be right well revenged upon him. Good lord, remember ye of your night's dream, and what the spirit of Sir Gawaine told you this night, yet God of his great goodness hath preserved you hitherto. Therefore, for God's sake, my lord, leave off by this, for blessed be God ye have won the field. For here we be three on live, and with Sir Mordred none on live. And if ye leave off now this wicked day of destiny is past. Tide me death, betide me life, saith the king, now I see him yonder alone he shall never escape mine hands, for at a better avail shall I never have him. God speed you well, said Sir Bedivere. Then the king gat his spear in both his hands, and ran toward Sir Mordred, crying, Traitor, now

is thy death day come. And when Sir Mordred heard Sir Arthur, he ran until him with his sword drawn in his hand. And there king Arthur smote Sir Mordred under the shield, with a foin of his spear, throughout the body more than a fathom. And when Sir Mordred felt that he had his death's wound, he thrust himself, with the might that he had up to the but of King Arthur's spear. And right so he smote his father Arthur with his sword holden in both hands, on the side of the head, that the sword pierced the helmet and the brain pan, and therewithal Sir Mordred fell stark dead to the earth. And the noble Arthur fell in a swoon to the earth, and there he swooned oftimes. Sir Lucan de butlere and Sir Bedivere oftimes heave him up. And so weakly they led him betwixt them both, to a little chapel not far from the sea side. And when the king was there he thought him well eased. Then heard they people cry in the field. Now go thou, Sir Lucan, said the king, and do me to wit what betokens that noise in the field. So Sir Lucan departed, for he was grievously wounded in many places. And so as he yede, he saw and hearkened by the moon-light, how the pillers and robbers were come into the field to pill and rob many a full noble knight of brooches and beads, of many a good ring, and many a rich jewel; and who that were not dead all out, there they slew for their harness and their riches. When Sir Lucan understood this work, he came to the king as soon as he might, and told him all what he had heard and seen. Therefore by my rede, said Sir Lucan, it is best that we bring you to some town. I would it were so, said the king. But I may not stand, mine head works so. Ah Sir Launcelot, said king Arthur, this day have I sore missed thee. Alas, that ever I was against thee, for now have I my death, whereof Sir Gawaine me warned in my dream. Then Sir Lucan took up the king the one part, and Sir Bedivere the other part, and in the lifting the king swooned, and Sir Lucan fell in a swoon with the lift, and that part of his guts fell out of his body, and therewith the noble knight's heart brast. And when the king awoke, he beheld Sir Lucan, how he lay foaming at the mouth, and part of his guts lay at his feet. Alas, said the king, this is to me a full heavy sight, to see this noble duke so die for my sake, for he would have holpen me that had more need of help than I. Also, he would not complain him, his heart was so set to help me. Now Jesu have mercy upon his soul. Then Sir Bedivere wept for the death of his brother. Leave this mourning and weeping, said the king, for all this will not avail thee, for wit thou well and I might live myself, the death of Sir Lucan would grieve

me evermore; but my time hieth fast, said the king. Therefore, said Arthur unto Sir Bedivere, take thou Excalibur, my good sword, and go with it to yonder water side, and when thou comest there I charge thee throw my sword in that water, and come again and tell me what thou there seest. My lord, said Bedivere, your commandment shall be done, and lightly bring you word again. So Sir Bedivere departed, and by the way he beheld that noble sword, that the pommel and the haft were all of precious stones; and then he said to himself, If I throw this rich sword in the water, thereof shall never come good, but harm and loss. And then Sir Bedivere hid Excalibur under a tree. And so, as soon as he might he came again unto the king, and said he had been at the water, and had thrown the sword into the water. What saw you there? said the king. Sir, he said, I saw nothing but waves and winds. That is untruly said of thee, said the king. Therefore go thou lightly again, and do my commandment; as thou art to me lief and dear, spare not, but throw it in. Then Sir Bedivere returned again, and took the sword in his hand; and then him thought sin and shame to throw away that noble sword, and returned again, and told to the king that he had been at the water and done his commandment. What saw thou there? said the king. Sir, he said, I saw nothing but the waters wappe and waves wanne. Ah, traitor untrue, said king Arthur, now hast thou betrayed me twice. Who would have weand that thou, that hast been to me so lief and dear, and thou art named a noble knight, and would betray me for the riches of the sword? But now go again lightly, for thy long tarrying putteth me in great jeopardy of my life, for I have taken cold. And if but thou do now as I bid thee, if ever I may see thee, I shall slay thee with mine own hands; for thou wouldst for my rich sword see me dead. Then Sir Bedivere departed, and went to the sword, and lightly took it up, and went to the water side, and there he bound the girdle about the hilts, and then he threw the sword as far into the water as he might, and there came an arm and an hand above the water and met it, and caught it, and so shook it thrice and brandished, and then vanished away the hand with the sword in the water. So, Sir Bedivere came again to the king, and told him what he saw. Alas, said the king, help me hence, for I dread me I have tarried over long. Then Sir Bedivere took the king upon his back, and so went with him to that water side. And when they were at the water side, even fast by the bank hove a little barge, with many fair ladies in it, and among them all was a queen, and all they had black hoods, and all they wept and shrieked

when they saw king Arthur. Now put me into the barge, said the king; and so he did softly. And there received him three queens with great mourning; and so they set him down, and in one of their laps king Arthur laid his head, and then that queen said: Ah, dear brother, why have ye tarried so long from me? Alas, this wound on your head hath caught over-much cold. And so then they rowed from the land, and Sir Bedivere beheld all those ladies go from him. Then Sir Bedivere cried, Ah, my lord Arthur, what shall become of me now ye go from me, and leave me here alone among mine enemies. Comfort thyself, said the king, and do as well as thou mayest, for in me is no trust for to trust in. For I will into the vale of Avalon to heal me of my grievous wound. And if thou hear never more of me, pray for my soul. But ever the queens and ladies wept and shrieked, that it was pity to hear. And as soon as Sir Bedivere had lost the sight of the barge, he wept and wailed, and so took the forest, and so he went all that night, and in the morning he was ware betwixt two holts hoar of a chapel and an hermitage.

3

AUCASSIN GOES TO WAR

(FROM "AUCASSIN AND NICOLETE," TRANSLATED BY ANDREW LANG)

Old Count Garia of Biaucaire is besieged by Count Bougars of Valence; but his son Aucassin, who should be heading the defence, keeps his chamber for love of the Saracen maiden Nicolete, whom his father has imprisoned. At length his father persuades him to lead a sally, on condition that he may see his lady and speak "two words or three" with her.

AUCASSIN was armed and mounted as ye have heard tell. God! how goodly sat the shield on his shoulder, the helm on his head, and the baldric on his left haunch! And the damoiseau was tall, fair, featly fashioned, and hardy of his hands, and the horse whereon he rode swift and keen, and straight had he spurred him forth of the gate. Now believe ye not that his mind was on kine, nor cattle of the booty, nor thought he how he might strike a knight, nor be stricken again; nor no such thing. Nay, no memory had Aucassin of aught of these; rather he so dreamed of Nicolete, his sweet lady, that he dropped his reins, forgetting all there was to do, and his horse that had felt the spur, bore him into the press and hurled among the foe, and they laid hands on him all about, and took him captive, and seized away his spear and shield, and straightway they led him off a prisoner, and were even now discoursing of what death he should die.

And when Aucassin heard them.

"Ha! God," said he, "sweet Saviour. Be these my deadly enemies that have taken me, and will soon cut off my head? And once my head is off, no more shall I speak with Nicolete, my sweet lady, that I love so well. Nathless have I here a good sword, and sit a good horse unwearied. If now I keep not my head for her sake, God help her never, if she love me more!"

The damoiseau was tall and strong, and the horse whereon he sat was right eager. And he laid hand to sword, and fell a-smiting to right and left, and smote through helm and nasal, and arm and clenched

hand, making a murder about him, like a wild boar when hounds fall on him in the forest, even till he struck down ten knights, and seven he hurt, and straightway he hurled out of the press, and rode back again at full speed, sword in hand. The Count Bougars de Valence heard say they were about hanging Aucassin, his enemy, so he came into that place, and Aucassin was ware of him, and gat his sword into his hand, and lashed at his helm with such a stroke that he diave it down on his head, and he being stunned, fell grovelling. And Aucassin laid hands on him, and caught him by the nasal of his helmet, and gave him to his father.

"Father," quoth Aucassin, "lo here is your mortal foe, who hath so waried on you with all malengin. Full twenty years did this war endure, and might not be ended by man."

"Fair son," said his father, "thy feats of youth shouldst thou do, and not seek after folly."

"Father," saith Aucassin, "sermon me no sermons, but fulfil my covenant."

"Hal what covenant, fair son?"

"What, father, hast thou forgotten it? By mine own head, whosoever forgets, will I not forget it, so much it hath me at heart. Didst thou not covenant with me when I took up arms, and went into the stour, that if God brought me back safe and sound, thou wouldst let me see Nicolete, my sweet lady, even so long that I may have of her two words or three, and one kiss? So didst thou covenant, and my mind is that thou keep thy word."

"I!" quoth the father, "God forsake me when I keep this covenant! Nay, if she were here, I would let her burn in the fire, and thyself shouldst be sore adread."

"Is this thy last word?" quoth Aucassin.

"So help me God," quoth his father, "yea!"

"Certes," quoth Aucassin, "this is a sorry thing meseems, when a man of thine age lies!"

"Count of Valence," quoth Aucassin, "I took thee?"

"In sooth, sir, didst thou," said the Count.

"Give me thy hand," saith Aucassin.

"Sir, with good will."

So he set his hand in the other's.

"Now givest thou me thy word," saith Aucassin, "that never whiles thou art living man wilt thou avail to do my father dishonour, or harm him in body, or in goods, but do it thou wilt?"

"Sir, in God's name," saith he, "mock me not, but put me to my ransom; ye cannot ask of me gold nor silver, horses nor palfreys, vair nor gris, hawks nor hounds, but I will give you them."

"What?" quoth Aucassin. "Ha, knowest thou not it was I that took thee?"

"Yea, sir," quoth the Count Bougars.

"God help me never, but I will make thy head fly from thy shoulders, if thou makest not troth," said Aucassin.

"In God's name," said he, "I make what promise thou wilt."

So they did the oath, and Aucassin let mount him on a horse, and took another and so led him back till he was all in safety.

ST. GEORGE AND THE DRAGON

(FROM RICHARD JOHNSON'S "THE SEVEN CHAMPIONS OF
CHRISTENDOM," 1576)

In "The Seven Champions of Christendom," St. George is of English birth. The son of the High Steward of England, born at Coventry, he is stolen in infancy by the Sorceress Kalyb, who rears him in princely fashion. As he grows to manhood, Kalyb falls in love with her young captive, and reveals his parentage to him. He seizes his opportunity to imprison her by her own arts in an enchanted rock, and frees the other six champions, also youths of noble birth, stolen by Kalyb from the chief countries of Christendom. Together they set out to seek adventure, and here the present narrative begins.

AFTER the 7 champions departed from the enchanted cave of Kalyb, they made their abode in the city of Coventry for the space of 9 months, in which time they erected a sumptuous monument over the remains of St. George's mother. And at that time and the year when Flora had embroidered the green mantle of the spring, they aimed themselves like knights-errant, and took their journey to seek for foreign adventures, accounting nothing more dishonourable than to spend their time in idleness, and not achieve somewhat that might make their names memorable to posterity. So travelling 30 days without any adventures worth noting, at length they came to a broad plain, where stood a brazen pillar, and where several ways met, which the worthy knights thought a proper place to take leave of each other, and every one went a contrary road. We will, for this time, likewise take leave of six, that we may accompany the fortunes of our English knight, who, after many months' travel by sea and land, happily arrived within the territories of Egypt, which country was then greatly annoyed by a dangerous dragon. But before he had journeyed far in that kingdom, the silent night outspread her sable wings and a still horror seemed to cover every part of nature. At length he came to a poor old hermitage, wherein he proposed to seek

some repose for himself and horse, till the rosy-fingered morning should again reluminate the vault of heaven and light him on his destined course. On entering the cottage, he found an ancient hermit, bowing under the weight of age, and almost consumed with holy watching and religious tears, to whom he thus addressed himself:

"Father, may a traveller, for this night, crave shelter with you for himself and his horse; or can you direct me to any town or village to which I may proceed on my journey with safety?"

The old man, starting at the sudden approach of St. George, made him answer.

"That he need not to inquire of his country, for he knew it by his burgonet" (for indeed thereon were engraved the arms of England). "But I sorrow," continued he, "for thy hard fortune, and that it is thy destiny to arrive in this our country of Egypt, wherein those alive are scarce sufficient to bury the dead, such cruel devastation is made through the land by a most terrible and dangerous dragon, now ranging up and down the country, the raging appetite of which must every day be appeased with the body of a virgin, whom he swalloweth down his envenomed throat; and whenever this horrid sacrifice is omitted, he breathes forth such a pestiferous stench as occasions mortal plague. And this having been practised for 24 years, there is not now one virgin left throughout all Egypt but the king's daughter; and she, to-morrow, is to be made an offering to the dragon, unless there can be any brave knight found who shall have courage enough to encounter him, and kill him; and then the king hath promised to give such a knight his daughter, whose life he shall have saved, in marriage, with the crown of Egypt after his decease."

This royal reward so animated the English knight that he vowed he would either save the king's daughter or lose his own life in so glorious an enterprise. So taking his repose that night in the old man's hermitage till the cheerful cock, the true messenger of day, gave him notice of the sun's uprise, which caused him to buckle on his armour and harness his steed with all the strong caparisons of war, he took his journey, guided only by the hermit, to the valley where the king's daughter was to be offered up in sacrifice. When he approached within sight of the valley, he saw at a distance the most amiable and beautiful virgin that ever eyes beheld, arrayed in a pure white Arabian silk, being led to the place of death, accompanied by many sage and modest matrons. The courage of the brave English knight was so stimulated by this melancholy scene that he thought every minute a whole day till he could rescue her from the threatened danger and save her from the insatiable jaws of the fiery

dragon; so, advancing towards the lady, he gave her hopes that her deliverance was at hand, and begged her to return to her father's court. The noble knight, like a bold and daring hero, then entered the valley where the dragon had his abode, who no sooner had sight of him, than his leathern throat sent forth a sound more terrible than thunder. The size of this fell dragon was fearful to behold, for from his shoulders to his tail the length was 50 feet; the glittering scales upon his body were as bright as silver, but harder than brass; his belly was of the colour of gold, and larger than a tun. Thus weltered he from his hideous den, and so fiercely assailed the gallant champion with his burning wings that at the first encounter he had almost felled him to the ground. But the knight, nimbly recovering himself, gave the dragon such a thrust with his spear that it shivered in a thousand pieces, upon which the furious dragon smote him so violently with his venomous tail that he brought both horse and man to the ground and sorely bruised two of St. George's ribs in the fall; but he, stepping backwards, chanced to get under an orange-tree, which had that rare virtue in it that no venomous creature durst come within the compass of its branches; and here the valiant knight rested himself till he had recovered his former strength. But he no sooner felt his spirits revive than, with an eager courage, he smote the burning dragon under his yellow burnished belly with his trusty sword Ascalon; and from the wound there came such an abundance of black venom that it spouted on the armour of the knight which, by the mere force of the poison, burst in two, and he himself fell on the ground, where he lay for some time quite senseless, but had luckily rolled himself under the orange-tree, where the dragon had not power to offer him any further violence.

The fruit of this tree was of that excellence that whoever tasted it was immediately cured of all manner of wounds and diseases. Now it was the noble champion's good fortune to recover himself a little by the pure aroma of the tree, and then he chanced to espy an orange which had lately dropped from it, by tasting of which he was so refreshed that in a short time he was as sound as when he began the encounter. Then he knelt down and made his humble supplication that heaven would send him such strength and agility of body as might enable him to slay the fell monster; which being done, with a bold and courageous heart he smote the dragon under the wing, where it was tender and without scale, whereby his good sword Ascalon, with an easy passage, went to the very heart, from whence there issued such an abundance of reeking gore as turned all the grass in the valley to a crimson hue; and the ground,

which was before parched up by the burning breath of the dragon, was now drenched in the moisture that proceeded from his venomous bowels, the loss of which forced him to yield his vital spirit to the champion's conquering sword.

The noble knight, St. George of England, having performed this, first paid due honour to the Almighty for his victory; and then, with his sword, cut off the dragon's head and fixed it on a truncheon made of that spear which, at the beginning of the battle, shivered in pieces on the dragon's scaly back. During this long and dangerous combat his trusty steed lay as it were in a swoon, without any motion; but the English champion now squeezing the juice of one of the oranges in his mouth, the virtue of it immediately expelled the venom of the poison, and he recovered his former strength.

There was then in the Egyptian court, and had been for some time, Almidor, the black king of Morocco, who had long sought the love of Sabra, the king's daughter; but by no policy or means could he accomplish what his heart desired. And now, having less hope than ever by the successful combat of St. George with the dragon, he resolved to try the utmost power of art and treacherously despoil the victor of his laurels, with which he falsely designed to crown his own temples, and thereby obtain the grace of the lady, who loathed his company and more detested his person than the crocodile of the Nile. But even as the wolf barks in vain against the moon, so shall this fantastical and cowardly Almidor attempt in vain to seize the glory won by the English knight; although he had hired by gifts and promises 12 Egyptian knights to beset the valley where St. George slew the burning dragon, who were to deprive him by force of the spoils of his conquest. Thus when the magnanimous champion came riding in triumph from the valley, expecting to have been received as a conqueror, with drums and trumpets, or to have heard the bells throughout the kingdom ringing with the joyful peals of victory, and every street illuminated with bonfires and blazing tapers, contrary to his expectations he was met by a troop of armed knights, not to conduct him in triumph to the Egyptian court, but, by insidious baseness and treachery, to deprive him of his life and the glory he had that day so nobly acquired by his invincible arms. For no sooner had he passed the entrance of the valley than he saw the Egyptian knights brandishing their weapons and dividing themselves to intercept him on his journey to the court. So, tying his horse to a tree, he resolved to try his fortune on foot, there being twelve to one; yet did St. George, at the first onset, so valiantly behave himself with his trusty sword Ascalon, that at one

stroke he slew three of the Egyptian knights; and before the golden chariot of the sun had gone down an hour in its diurnal course, some he had dismembered of their heads and limbs, and some he had cut in two, so that their entrails fell to the earth and not one was left alive to carry home the news of their defeat. Almidor, the black king, stood the whole time of the battle on the top of a mountain to behold the success of his hired champions; but when he saw the dismal catastrophe of those mercenary knights, and how the good fortune of the English champion had carried the day, he cursed his destiny and accused blind chance of cruelty in thus disappointing the hopes of his treacherous enterprise; but, having a heart full fraught with malice and envy, he secretly vowed to himself that he would practise some other treachery to bring St. George to destruction. So, running before to the court of King Ptolemy, and without relating what had happened to the twelve Egyptian Knights, he cried out: "Victoria, victoria, the enemy of Egypt is slain!" Upon which, Ptolemy ordered every street of the city of Memphis to be hung with rich arras and embroidered tapestry, and likewise provided a sumptuous chariot of massive gold, the wheels and timberwork whereof were of the purest ebony, the covering rich silk embossed with gold. This, with a hundred of the noblest peers of Egypt, attired in crimson velvet, mounted on milk-white coursers richly caparisoned, attended the arrival of St. George, who was conducted in the most solemn manner into the city, all the loftiest as well as the sweetest instruments of music both going before and following after the resplendent chariot in which he was drawn to the court of King Ptolemy, where he surrendered up his trophies of his conquest into the hands of the beauteous Sabra, who was so ravished by the noble person and princely presence of the English knight that for a time she was scarcely able to speak; but, having recovered herself, she took him by the hand and led him to a rich pavilion, where she unbuckled his armour, and with the most precious salves soothed his wounds, and with fine linen cloths wiped off the blood; after which she conducted him to a rich repast, furnished with all manner of delicate meats, where the king her father was present, who inquired of his country, parentage and name. After the banquet was over, he conferred on him the honour of knighthood, and put upon his feet a pair of golden spurs. But the lovely princess, his daughter, could feast on nothing but the hopes of the champion's love, and having attended him to his night's repose, she sat near his bed, and striking the melodious strings of her lute, lulled him to rest with the sweetest harmony that ever was heard.

CLAN CHATTAN AND CLAN QUHELE

(FROM SIR WALTER SCOTT'S "FAIR MAID OF PERTH")

"The Fair Maid of Perth" owed its origin to an historical incident after Scott's own heart. Throughout the Middle Ages the turbulence of the Highlands gave to Perth many of the characteristics of a frontier town. Here, in 1396, two great Highland clans, Clan Quhele and Clan Chattan, met, as on neutral ground, to fight out their feud in the persons of thirty champions a side, in presence of the gentle King Robert III, his ruthless brother Albany, and a huge concourse of nobles and burghers.

The character of Eachin or Hector, the young chief of Clan Quhele, is of Scott's own devising. Highly strung and untried in war, he had secretly confessed to his foster-father, Torquil of the Oak, that he shrank in terror from the approaching battle. Torquil declared that he must be bewitched. Meanwhile he secured, by a ruse, the absence of the youngest of the rival champions, hoping to have Eachin set aside to equalize the numbers. He also sends his son Norman to buy a mail-shirt of the choicest workmanship from the famous Perth armourer, Henry Smith, or Gow, the hero of the novel—a bold fellow, as skilful in the use of weapons as in the making of them. Henry, having good reason to believe Eachin his successful rival for Catharine Glower, the Fair Maid of Perth, gives Norman the armour, and a dagger for himself, on condition that he will persuade Eachin to meet him later in single combat. He has little hope, however, of his consenting, and so joins the spectators of the combat in the worst of humours.

THE plain is washed on one side by the deep and swelling Tay. There was erected within it a strong palisade, enclosing on three sides a space of one hundred and fifty yards in length, and seventy-four yards in width. The fourth side of the lists was considered as sufficiently fenced by the river. An amphitheatre for the accommodation of spectators surrounded the palisade, leaving a large space free to be occupied by armed men on foot and horseback, and for the more ordinary class

of spectators. At the extremity of the lists, which was nearest to the city, there was a range of elevated galleries for the king and his courtiers, so highly decorated with rustic treillage, intermingled with gilded ornaments, that the spot retains to this day the name of the Golden, or Gilded Arbour.

The mountain minstrelsy, which sounded the appropriate pibrochs or battle-tunes of the rival confederacies, was silent when they entered on the Inch, for such was the order which had been given. Two stately, but aged warriors, each bearing the banner of his tribe, advanced to the opposite extremities of the lists, and pitching their standards into the earth, prepared to be spectators of a fight in which they were not to join. The pipers, who were also to be neutral in the strife, took their places by their respective *brattachs*.

The multitude received both bands with the same general shout, with which on similar occasions they welcome those from whose exertion they expect amusement, or what they term sport. The destined combatants returned no answer to this greeting, but each party advanced to the opposite extremities of the lists, where were entrances by which they were to be admitted to the interior. A strong body of men-at-arms guarded either access; and the Earl Marshal at the one, and the Lord High Constable at the other, carefully examined each individual, to see whether he had the appropriate arms, being steel-cap, mail-shirt, two-handed sword, and dagger. They also examined the numbers of each party; and great was the alarm among the multitude, when the Earl of Errol held up his hand and cried,—“Ho!—The combat cannot proceed, for the Clan Chattan lack one of their number.”

“What reck of that?” said the young Earl of Crawford; “they should have counted better ere they left home.”

The Earl Marshal, however, agreed with the Constable that the fight could not proceed until the inequality should be removed; and a general apprehension was excited in the assembled multitude, that after all the preparation there would be no battle.

Of all present, there were only two perhaps who rejoiced at the prospect of the combat being adjourned; and these were, the Captain of the Clan Quhele, and the tender-hearted King Robert. Meanwhile the two chiefs, each attended by a special friend and adviser, met in the midst of the lists, having, to assist them in determining what was to be done, the Earl Marshal, the Lord High Constable, the Earl of Crawford, and Sir Patrick Charteris. The Chief of the Clan Chattan

declared himself willing and desirous of fighting upon the spot, without regard to the disparity of numbers.

"That," said Torquil of the Oak, "Clan Quhele will never consent to. You can never win honour from us with the sword, and you seek but a subterfuge that you may say when you are defeated, as you know you will be, that it was for want of the number of your band fully counted out. But I make a proposal—Ferquhard Day was the youngest of your band, Eachin MacIan is the youngest of ours—we will set him aside in place of the man who has fled from the combat."

"A most unjust and unequal proposal," exclaimed Toshach Beg, the second, as he might be termed, of MacGillie Chattanach. "The life of the chief is to the clan the breath of our nostrils, nor will we ever consent that our chief shall be exposed to dangers which the Captain of Clan Quhele does not share."

Torquil saw with deep anxiety that his plan was about to fail, when the objection was made to Hector's being withdrawn from the battle; and he was meditating how to support his proposal, when Eachin himself interfered. His timidity, it must be observed, was not of that sordid and selfish nature which induces those who are infected by it calmly to submit to dishonour rather than risk danger. On the contrary, he was morally brave, though constitutionally timid, and the shame of avoiding the combat became at the moment more powerful than the fear of facing it.

"I will not hear," he said, "of a scheme which will leave my sword sheathed during this day's glorious combat. If I am young in arms, there are enough of brave men around me, whom I may imitate if I cannot equal."

He spoke these words in a spirit which imposed on Torquil, and perhaps on the young chief himself.

"Now, God bless his noble heart!" said the foster-father to himself. "I was sure the foul spell would be broken through, and that the tardy spirit which besieged him would fly at the sound of the pipe and the first flutter of the *brattach*!"

"Hear me, Lord Marshal," said the Constable. "The hour of combat may not be much longer postponed, for the day approaches to high noon. Let the Chief of Clan Chattan take the half hour which remains, to find, if he can, a substitute for this deserter; if he cannot, let them fight as they stand."

"Content I am," said the Marshal, "though as none of his own clan

are nearer than fifty miles, I see not how MacGillie Chattanach is to find an auxiliary."

"That is his business," said the High Constable; "but if he offers a high reward, there are enough of stout yeomen surrounding the lists, who will be glad enough to stretch their limbs in such a game as is expected. I myself, did my quality and charge permit, would blithely take a turn of work amongst these wild fellows, and think it fame won."

They communicated their decision to the Highlanders, and the Chief of the Clan Chattan replied, "You have judged impartially and nobly, my lords, and I deem myself obliged to follow your direction. So make proclamation, heralds, that if any one will take his share with Clan Chattan of the honours and chances of this day, he shall have present payment of a gold crown, and liberty to fight to the death in my ranks."

"You are something chary of your treasure, Chief," said the Earl Marshal; "a gold crown is poor payment for such a campaign as is before you."

"If there be any man willing to fight for honour," replied MacGillie Chattanach, "the price will be enough; and I want not the service of a fellow who draws his sword for gold alone."

The heralds had made their progress, moving half-way round the lists, stopping from time to time, to make proclamation as they had been directed, without the least apparent disposition on the part of anyone to accept of the proffered enlistment. Some sneered at the poverty of the Highlanders, who set so mean a price upon such a desperate service. Others affected resentment, that they should esteem the blood of citizens so lightly. None showed the slightest intention to undertake the task proposed, until the sound of the proclamation reached Henry of the Wynd, as he stood without the barrier, speaking from time to time with Bailie Craigdallie, or rather listening vaguely to what the magistrate was saying to him.

"Ha! what proclaim they?" he cried out.

"A liberal offer on the part of MacGillie Chattanach," said the host of the Griffin, "who proposes a gold crown to anyone who will turn wild cat for the day, and be killed a little in his service! That's all."

"How!" exclaimed the Smith eagerly, "Do they make proclamation for a man to fight against the Clan Quhele?"

"Aye, marry do they," said Griffin; "but I think they will find no such fools in Perth."

He had hardly said the word, when he beheld the Smith clear the

barriers at a single bound, and alight in the lists, saying, "Here am I, Sir Herald, Henry of the Wynd, willing to do battle on the part of the Clan Chattan."

A cry of admiration ran through the multitude, while the grave burghers, not being able to conceive the slightest reason for Henry's behaviour, concluded that his head must be absolutely turned with the love of fighting. The provost was especially shocked.

"Thou art mad," he said, "Henry! Thou hast neither two-handed sword nor shirt of mail."

"Truly no," said Henry, "for I parted with a mail-shirt, which I had made for myself, to yonder gay Chief of the Clan Quhele, who will soon find on his shoulders with what sort of blows I clink my revets! As for two-handed sword, why, this boy's brand will serve my turn till I can master a heavier one."

"This must not be," said Errol. "Hark thee, armourer, by Saint Mary, thou shalt have my Milan hauberk and good Spanish sword."

"I thank your noble earlship, Sir Gilbert Hay; but the yoke with which your brave ancestor turned the battle at Loncarty, would serve my turn well enough. I am little used to sword or harness that I have not wrought myself, because I do not well know what blows the one will bear out without being cracked, or the other lay on without snapping."

The cry had in the meanwhile run through the multitude, and passed into the town, that the dauntless Smith was about to fight without armour, when, just as the fatal hour was approaching, the shrill voice of a female was heard screaming for passage through the crowd. The multitude gave place to her importunity, and she advanced, breathless with haste, under the burden of a mail hauberk and a large two-handed sword. The widow of Oliver Proudfoot was soon recognized, and the arms which she bore were those of the Smith himself, which, occupied by her husband on the fatal evening when he was murdered, had been naturally conveyed to his house with the dead body, and were now, by the exertions of his grateful widow, brought to the lists at a moment when such proved weapons were of the last consequence to their owner. Henry joyfully received the well-known arms, and the widow with trembling haste assisted in putting them on, and then took leave of him, saying, "God for the champion of the widow and orphan, and ill luck to all who come before him!"

Confident at feeling himself in his well-proved armour, Henry shook himself as if to settle the steel-shirt around him, and, unsheathing

the two-handed sword, made it flourish over his head, cutting the air through which it whistled in the form of the figure eight, with an ease and sleight of hand, that proved how powerfully and skilfully he could wield the ponderous weapon. The champions were now ordered to march in their turns around the lists, crossing so as to avoid meeting each other, and making obeisance as they passed the Golden Arbour where the king was seated.

While this course was performing, most of the spectators were again curiously comparing the stature, limbs, and sinews of the two parties, and endeavouring to form a conjecture as to the probable issue of the combat. The feud of a hundred years, with all its acts of aggression and retaliation, was concentrated in the bosom of each combatant. Their countenances seemed fiercely writen into the wildest expression of pride, hate, and a desperate purpose of fighting to the very last.

The spectators murmured a joyful applause, in high-wrought expectation of the bloody game. Wagers were offered and accepted both on the general issue of the conflict, and on the feats of particular champions. The clear, frank, and elated look of Henry Smith rendered him a general favourite among the spectators, and odds, to use the modern expression, were taken, that he would kill three of his opponents before he himself fell. Scarcely was the Smith equipped for the combat, when the commands of the chiefs ordered the champions into their places; and at the same moment Henry heard the voice of Simon Glover issuing from the crowd, who were now silent with expectation, and calling on him, "Harry Smith, Harry Smith, what madness hath possessed thee?"

"Aye, he wishes to save his hopeful son-in-law, that is, or is to be, from the Smith's handling," was Henry's first thought—his second was to turn and speak with him—and his third, that he could on no pretext desert the band which he had joined, or even seem desirous to delay the fight, consistently with honour.

He turned himself, therefore, to the business of the hour. Both parties were disposed by the respective chiefs in three lines, each containing ten men. They were arranged with such intervals between each individual, as offered him scope to wield his sword, the blade of which was five feet long, not including the handle. The second and third lines were to come up as reserves, in case the first experienced disaster. On the right of the array of Clan Quhele, the chief, Eachin MacClan, placed himself in the second line betwixt two of his foster-brothers. Four of them occupied the right of the first line, whilst

the father and two others protected the rear of the beloved chieftain. Torquil, in particular, kept close behind, for the purpose of covering him. Thus Eachin stood in the centre of nine of the strongest men of his band, having four especial defenders in front, one on each hand, and three in the rear.

The line of the Clan Chattan was arranged in precisely the same order, only that the chief occupied the centre of the middle rank, instead of being on the extreme right. This induced Henry Smith, who saw in the opposing bands only one enemy, and that was the unhappy Eachin, to propose placing himself on the left of the front rank of the Clan Chattan. But the leader disapproved of this arrangement; and having reminded Henry that he owed him obedience, as having taken wages at his hand, he commanded him to occupy the space in the third line, immediately behind himself,—a post of honour certainly, which Henry could not decline, though he accepted of it with reluctance.

When the clans were thus drawn up opposed to each other, they intimated their feudal animosity, and their eagerness to engage, by a wild scream which, uttered by the Clan Quhele, was answered and echoed back by the Clan Chattan, the whole at the same time shaking their swords, and menacing each other, as if they meant to conquer the imagination of their opponents ere they mingled in the actual strife.

At this trying moment, Torquil, who had never feared for himself, was agitated with alarm on the part of his *dault*, yet consoled by observing that he kept a determined posture; and that the few words which he spoke to his clan were delivered boldly, and well calculated to animate them to combat, as expressing his resolution to partake their fate in death or victory. But there was no time for further observation. The trumpets of the king sounded a charge, the bagpipes blew up their screaming and maddening notes, and the combatants, starting forward in regular order, and increasing their pace till they came to a smart run, met together in the centre of the ground, as a furious land torrent encounters an advancing tide.

For an instant or two the front lines, hewing at each other with their long swords, seemed engaged in a succession of single combats; but the second and third ranks soon came up on either side, actuated alike by the eagerness of hatred and the thirst of honour, pressed through the intervals, and rendered the scene a tumultuous chaos, over which the huge swords rose and sank, some still glittering, others streaming with blood, appearing, from the wild rapidity with which they were

swayed, rather to be put in motion by some complicated machinery, than to be wielded by human hands. Some of the combatants, too much crowded together to use those long weapons, had already betaken themselves to their poniards, and endeavoured to get within the sword-sweep of those opposed to them. In the meantime, blood flowed fast, and the groans of those who fell began to mingle with the cries of those who fought; for, according to the manner of the Highlanders at all times, they could hardly be said to shout, but to yell. Those of the spectators, whose eyes were best accustomed to such scenes of blood and confusion, could nevertheless discover no advantage yet acquired by either party. The conflict swayed, indeed, at different intervals, forwards or backwards, but it was only in momentary superiority, which the party who acquired it almost instantly lost by a corresponding exertion on the other side. The wild notes of the pipers were still heard above the tumult, and stimulated to further exertions the fury of the combatants.

At once, however, and as if by mutual agreement, the instruments sounded a retreat; it was expressed in wailing notes, which seemed to imply a dirge for the fallen. The two parties disengaged themselves from each other, to take breath for a few minutes. The eyes of the spectators greedily surveyed the shattered array of the combatants as they drew off from the contest, but found it still impossible to decide which had sustained the greater loss. It seemed as if the Clan Chattan had lost rather fewer men than their antagonists; but in compensation, the bloody plaids and shirts of their party (for several on both sides had thrown their mantles away) showed more wounded men than the Clan Quhele. About twenty of both sides lay on the field dead or dying; and arms and legs lopped off, heads cleft to the chin, slashes deep through the shoulder into the breast, showed at once the fury of the combat, the ghastly character of the weapons used, and the fatal strength of the arms which wielded them. The Chief of the Clan Chattan had behaved himself with the most determined courage, and was slightly wounded. Eachin also had fought with spirit, surrounded by his body-guard. His sword was bloody; his bearing bold and warlike; and he smiled when old Torquil, folding him in his arms, loaded him with praises and with blessings.

The two chiefs, after allowing their followers to breathe for the space of about ten minutes, again drew up in their files, diminished by nearly one-third of their original number. They now chose their ground nearer to the river than that on which they had formerly

encountered, which was encumbered with the wounded and the slain. Some of the former were observed, from time to time, to raise themselves to gain a glimpse of the field, and sink back, most of them to die from the effusion of blood which poured from the terrific gashes inflicted by the claymore.

Harry Smith was easily distinguished by his Lowland habit, as well as his remaining on the spot where they had first encountered, where he stood leaning on a sword beside a corpse, whose bonneted head, carried to ten yards' distance from the body by the force of the blow which had swept it off, exhibited the oak-leaf, the appropriate ornament of the bodyguard of Eachin MacIan. Since he slew this man, Henry had not struck a blow, but had contented himself with warding off many that were dealt at himself, and some which were aimed at the chief. MacGillie Chattanach became alarmed, when, having given the signal that his men should again draw together, he observed that his powerful recruit remained at a distance from the ranks, and showed little disposition to join them.

"What ails thee, man?" said the chief. "Can so strong a body have a mean and cowardly spirit? Come and make in to the combat."

"You as good as called me hireling but now," replied Henry. "If I am such," pointing to the headless corpse, "I have done enough for my day's wage."

"He that serves me without counting his hours," replied the chief, "I reward him without reckoning wages."

"Then," said the Smith, "I fight as a volunteer, and in the post which best likes me."

"All that is at your own discretion," replied MacGillie Chattanach, who saw the prudence of humouring an auxiliary of such promise.

"It is enough," said Henry; and shouldering his heavy weapon, he joined the rest of the combatants with alacrity, and placed himself opposite to the Chief of the Clan Quhele.

It was then, for the first time, that Eachin showed some uncertainty. He had long looked up to Henry as the best combatant which Perth and its neighbourhood could bring into the lists. His hatred to him as a rival was mingled with recollection of the ease with which he had once, though unarmed, foiled his own sudden and desperate attack; and when he beheld him with his eyes fixed in his direction, the dripping sword in his hand, and obviously meditating an attack on him individually, his courage fell, and he gave symptoms of wavering, which did not escape his foster-father.

It was lucky for Eachin that Torquil was incapable, from the formation of his own temper, and that of those with whom he had lived, to conceive the idea of one of his own tribe, much less of his chief and foster-son, being deficient in animal courage. Could he have imagined this, his grief and rage might have driven him to the fierce extremity of taking Eachin's life, to save him from staining his honour. But his mind rejected the idea that his *dault* was a personal coward, as something which was monstrous and unnatural. That he was under the influence of enchantment was a solution which superstition had suggested, and he now anxiously, but in a whisper, demanded of Hector, "Does the spell now darken thy spirit, Eachin?"

"Yes, wretch that I am," answered the unhappy youth; "and yonder stands the fell enchanter!"

"What!" exclaimed Torquil, "and you wear harness of his making?—Norman, miserable boy, why brought you that accursed mail?"

"If my arrow has flown astray, I can but shoot my life after it," answered Norman-nan-Ord.—"Stand firm, you shall see me break the spell."

"Yes, stand firm," said Torquil. "He may be a fell enchanter; but my own ear has heard, and my own tongue has told, that Eachin shall leave the battle whole, free, and unwounded—let us see the Saxon wizard who can gainsay that. He may be a strong man, but the fair forest of the oak shall fall, stock and bough, ere he lay a finger on my *dault*. Ring around him, my sons,—*Bas air son Eachin!*"

The sons of Torquil shouted back the words, which signify, "Death for Hector."

Encouraged by their devotion, Eachin renewed his spirit, and called boldly to the minstrels of his clan, "*Seid suas*," that is, Strike up.

The wild pibroch again sounded the onset; but the two parties approached each other more slowly than at first, as men who knew and respected each other's valour. Henry Wynd, in his impatience to begin the contest, advanced before the Clan Chattan, and signed to Eachin to come on. Norman, however, sprang forward to cover his foster-brother, and there was a general, though momentary pause, as if both parties were willing to obtain an omen of the fate of the day, from the event of this duel. The Highlander advanced, with his large sword uplifted, as in act to strike; but just as he came within sword's length, he dropped the long and cumbrous weapon, leapt lightly over the Smith's sword, as he fetched a cut at him, drew his dagger, and, being thus within Henry's guard, struck him with the weapon (his own

gift) on the side of the throat, directing the blow downwards into the chest, and calling aloud, at the same time, "You taught me the stab!"

But Henry Wynd wore his own good hauberk, doubly defended with a lining of tempered steel. Had he been less surely armed, his combats had been ended for ever. Even as it was, he was slightly wounded.

"Fool!" he replied, striking Norman a blow with the pommel of his longsword, which made him stagger backwards, "you were taught the thrust, but not the parry"; and fetching a blow at his antagonist, which cleft his skull through the steel-cap, he strode over the lifeless body to engage the young chief, who now stood open before him.

But the sonorous voice of Torquil thundered out, "*Far eil air son Eachin!*" (Another for Hector!) and the two brethren who flanked their chief on each side, thrust forward upon Henry, and, striking both at once, compelled him to keep the defensive.

"Forward, race of the Tiger-Cat!" cried MacGillie Chattanach; "save the brave Saxon; let these kites feel your talons!"

Already much wounded, the chief dragged himself up to the Smith's assistance, and cut down one of the Leichtach by whom he was assailed. Henry's own good sword rid him of the other.

"*Reist air son Eachin!*" (Again for Hector), shouted the faithful foster-father.

"*Bas air son Eachin!*" (Death for Hector), answered two more of his devoted sons, and opposed themselves to the fury of the Smith and those who had come to his aid; while Eachin, moving towards the left wing of the battle, sought less formidable adversaries, and again, by some show of valour, revived the sinking hopes of his followers. The two children of the oak who had covered this movement, shared the fate of their brethren; for the cry of the Clan Chattan chief had drawn to that part of the field some of his bravest warriors. The sons of Torquil did not fall unavenged, but left dreadful marks of their swords on the persons of the dead and living. But the necessity of keeping their most distinguished soldiers around the person of their chief told to disadvantage on the general event of the combat; and so few were now the number who remained fighting, that it was easy to see that the Clan Chattan had fifteen of their number left, though most of them wounded; and that of the Clan Quhele only about ten remained, of whom there were four of the chief's bodyguard, including Torquil himself.

They fought and struggled on, however, and as their strength

decayed their fury seemed to increase. Henry Wynd, now wounded in many places, was still bent on breaking through, or exterminating the band of bold hearts who continued to fight around the object of his animosity. But still the father's shout of "Another for Hector!" was cheerfully answered by the fatal countersign, "Death for Hector!" and though the Clan Quhele were now outnumbered, the combat seemed still dubious. It was bodily lassitude alone that again compelled them to another pause.

The Clan Chattan were then observed to be twelve in number, but two or three were scarce able to stand without leaning on their swords. Five were left of the Clan Quhele; Torquil and his youngest son were of the number, both slightly wounded. Eachin alone had, from the vigilance used to intercept all blows levelled against his person, escaped without injury. The rage of both parties had sunk, through exhaustion, into sullen desperation. They walked staggering, as if in their sleep, through the carcasses of the slain, and gazed on them, as if again to animate their hatred towards their surviving enemies by viewing the friends they had lost.

The multitude soon after beheld the survivors of the desperate conflict drawing together to renew the exterminating feud on the banks of the river, as the spot least slippery with blood, and less encumbered with the bodies of the slain.

"For God's sake—for the sake of the mercy which we daily pray for," said the kind-hearted old king to the Duke of Albany, "let this be ended! Wherefore should these wretched rags and remnants of humanity be suffered to complete their butchery!—Surely they will now be ruled, and accept of peace on moderate terms?"

"Compose yourself, my liege," said his brother. "These men are the pest of the Lowlands. Both chiefs are still living—if they go back unharmed, the whole day's work is cast away. Remember your promise to the Council, that you would not cry hold."

"You compel me to a great crime, Albany, both as a king, who should protect his subjects, and as a Christian man, who respects the brother of his faith."

"You judge wrong, my lord," said the duke; "these are not loving subjects, but disobedient rebels, as my Lord of Crawford can bear witness; and they are still less Christian men, for the Prior of the Dominicans will vouch for me that they are more than half heathen."

The king sighed deeply. "You must work your pleasure, and are too wise for me to contend with. I can but turn away, and shut my

eyes from the sights and sounds of a carnage which makes me sicken. But well I know that God will punish me for even witnessing this waste of human life."

"Sound, trumpets," said Albany; "their wounds will stiffen if they dally longer."

While this was passing, Torquil was embracing and encouraging his young chief.

"Resist the witchcraft but a few minutes longer! Be of good cheer—you will come off without either scar or scratch, wem or wound. Be of good cheer!"

"How can I be of good cheer," said Eachin, "while my brave kinsmen have one by one died at my feet?—died all for me, who could never deserve the least of their kindness!"

"And for what were they born save to die for their chief?" said Torquil, composedly. "Why lament that the arrow returns not to the quiver, providing it hit the mark? Cheer up yet—Here are Tormot and I but little hurt, while the Wild-Cats drag themselves through the plain as if they were half throttled by the terriers. Yet one brave stand, and the day shall be your own, though it may well be that you alone remain alive.—Minstrels, sound the gathering!"

The pipers on both sides blew their charge, and the combatants again mingled in battle, not indeed with the same strength, but with unabated inveteracy. They were joined by those whose duty it was to have remained neuter, but who now found themselves unable to do so. The two old champions who bore the standards had gradually advanced from the extremity of the lists, and now approached close to the immediate scene of action. When they beheld the carnage more nearly they were mutually impelled by the desire to revenge their brethren or not to survive them. They attacked each other furiously with the lances to which the standards were attached, closed after exchanging several deadly thrusts, then grappled in close strife, still holding their banners, until at length, in the eagerness of their conflict, they fell together into the Tay, and were found drowned after the combat closely locked in each other's arms. The fury of battle, the frenzy of rage and despair, infected next the minstrels. The two pipers, who, during the conflict, had done their utmost to keep up the spirits of their brethren, now saw the dispute wellnigh terminated for want of men to support it. They threw down their instruments, rushed desperately upon each other with their daggers, and each being more intent on dispatching his opponent than in defending himself, the piper of Clan Quhele was

almost instantly slain, and he of Clan Chattan mortally wounded. The last, nevertheless, again grasped his instrument, and the pibroch of the clan yet poured its expiring notes over the Clan Chattan, while the dying minstrel had breath to inspire it. The instrument which he used, or at least that part of it called the chanter, is preserved in the family of a Highland chief to his day, and is much honoured under the name of the *Federan Dhu*, or Black Chanter.¹

Meanwhile, in the final charge, young Tormot, devoted, like his brethren, by his father Torquil to the protection of his chief, had been mortally wounded by the unsparing sword of the Smith. The other two remaining of the Clan Quhele had also fallen, and Torquil, with his foster-son and the wounded Tormot, forced to retreat before eight or ten of the Clan Chattan, made a stand on the bank of the river, while their enemies were making such exertions as their wounds would permit to come up with them. Torquil had just reached the spot where he had resolved to make the stand, when the youth Tormot dropped and expired. His death drew from his father the first and only sigh which he had breathed throughout the eventful day.

"My son Tormot!" he said, "my youngest and dearest! But if I save Hector, I save all. Now, my darling *dault*, I have done for thee all that man may, excepting the last. Let me undo the clasps of that ill-omened armour, and do thou put on that of Tormot; it is light, and will fit thee well. While you do so, I will rush on these crippled men, and make what play with them I can. I trust I shall have but little to do, for they are following each other like disabled steers. At least, darling of my soul, if I am unable to save thee, I can show thee how a man should die."

While Torquil thus spoke, he unloosed the clasps of the young chief's hauberk, in the simple belief that he could thus break the meshes which fear and necromancy had twined about his heart.

"My father, my father, my more than parent!" said the unhappy Eachin—"Stay with me!—with you by my side, I feel I can fight to the last."

"It is impossible," said Torquil. "I will stop them coming up,

¹ The present Cluny MacPherson, chief of his clan, is in possession of this ancient trophy of their presence at the North Inch. Another account of it is given by a tradition, which says that an aerial minstrel appeared over the heads of the Clan Chattan, and having played some wild strains, let the instrument drop from his hand. Being made of glass, it was broken by the fall, excepting only the chanter, which, as usual, was of *lignum vitae*. The MacPherson piper secured this enchanted pipe, and the possession of it is still considered as ensuring the prosperity of the clan.

while you put on the hauberk. God eternally bless thee, beloved of my soul!"

And then, brandishing his sword, Torquil of the Oak rushed forward with the same fatal war-cry which had so often sounded over that bloody field, *Bas air son Eachin!*—The words rang three times in a voice of thunder; and each time that he cried his war-shout he struck down one of the Clan Chattan, as he met them successively straggling towards him.—"Brave battle, hawk—well flown, falcon!" exclaimed the multitude, as they witnessed exertions which seemed, even at this last hour, to threaten a change of the fortunes of the day. Suddenly these cries were hushed into silence, and succeeded by a clashing of swords so dreadful, as if the whole conflict had recommenced in the person of Henry Wynd and Torquil of the Oak. They cut, foined, hewed, and thrust, as if they had drawn their blades for the first time that day; and their inveteracy was mutual, for Torquil recognized the foul wizard who, as he supposed, had cast a spell over his child; and Henry saw before him the giant who, during the whole conflict, had interrupted the purpose for which alone he had joined the combatants—that of engaging in single combat with Hector. They fought with an equality which, perhaps, would not have existed, had not Henry, more wounded than his antagonist, been somewhat deprived of his usual agility.

Meanwhile Eachin, finding himself alone, after a disorderly and vain attempt to put on his foster-brother's harness, became animated by an emotion of shame and despair, and hurried forward to support his foster-father in the terrible struggle, ere some other of the Clan Chattan should come up. When he was within five yards, and sternly determined to take his share in the death-fight, his foster-father fell, cleft from the collar-bone wellnigh to the heart, and murmuring with his last breath, *Bas air son Eachin!*—The unfortunate youth saw the fall of his last friend, and at the same moment beheld the deadly enemy who had hunted him through the whole field, standing within sword's point of him, and brandishing the huge weapon which had hewed its way to his life through so many obstacles. Perhaps this was enough to bring his constitutional timidity to its highest point; or perhaps he recollected, at the same moment, that he was without defensive armour, and that a line of enemies, halting indeed and crippled, but eager for revenge and blood, were closely approaching. It is enough to say, that his heart sickened, his eyes darkened, his ears tingled, his brain turned giddy—all other considerations were lost in the apprehension of

instant death; and, drawing one ineffectual blow at the Smith, he avoided that which was aimed at him in return, by bounding backward; and ere the former could recover his weapon, Eachin had plunged into the stream of the Tay. A roar of contumely pursued him as he swam across the river, although, perhaps, not a dozen of those who joined in it would have behaved otherwise in the like circumstances. Henry looked after the fugitive in silence and surprise, but could not speculate on the consequences of his flight, on account of the faintness which seemed to overpower him as soon as the animation of the contest had subsided. He sat down on the grassy bank, and endeavoured to stanch such of his wounds as were pouring fastest.

The victors had the general meed of gratulation. The Duke of Albany and others went down to survey the field; and Henry Wynd was honoured with particular notice.

"If thou wilt follow me, good fellow," said the Black Douglas, "I will change thy leathern apron for a knight's girdle, and thy burgage tenement for an hundred-pound-land to maintain thy rank withal."

"I thank you humbly, my lord," said the Smith, dejectedly, "but I have shed blood enough already; and Heaven has punished me, by foiling the only purpose for which I entered the combat."

"How, friend?" said Douglas. "Didst thou not fight for the Clan Chattan, and have they not gained a glorious conquest?"

"*I fought for my own hand,*" said the Smith indifferently; and the expression is still proverbial in Scotland.¹

The good King Robert now came up on an ambling palfrey, having entered the barriers for the purpose of causing the wounded to be looked after.

"My lord of Douglas," he said, "you vex the poor man with temporal matters, when it seems he may have short time to consider those that are spiritual. Has he no friends here who will bear him where his bodily wounds, and the health of his soul, may be both cared for?"

"He hath as many friends as there are good men in Perth," said Sir Patrick Charteris; "and I esteem myself one of the closest."

"A churl will savour of churl's kind," said the haughty Douglas, turning his horse aside; "the proffer of knighthood from the sword of Douglas had recalled him from death's door, had there been a drop of gentle blood in his body."

Disregarding the taunt of the mighty earl, the Knight of Kinfauns

¹ Meaning, I did such a thing for my own pleasure, not for your profit.

dismounted to take Henry in his arms, as he now sank back from very faintness. But he was prevented by Simon Glover, who, with other burgesses of consideration, had now entered the barrace.

"Henry, my beloved son Henry!" said the old man. "Oh, what tempted you to this fatal affray?—Dying—speechless."

"No—not speechless," said Henry.—"Catharine——"

He could utter no more.

"Catharine is well, I trust: and shall be thine—that is, if——"

"If she be safe, thou wouldst say, old man," said the Douglas, who, though something affronted at Henry's rejection of his offer, was too magnanimous not to interest himself in what was passing.—"She is safe, if Douglas's banner can protect her—safe, and shall be rich. Douglas can give wealth to those who value it more than honour."

"For her safety, my lord, let the heartfelt thanks and blessings of a father go with the noble Douglas. For wealth, we are rich enough—Gold cannot restore my beloved son."

"A marvel!" said the earl,—"a churl refuses nobility—a citizen despises gold!"

"Under your lordship's favour," said Sir Patrick, "I, who am knight and noble, take licence to say that such a brave man as Henry Wynd may reject honourable titles—such an honest man as this reverend citizen may dispense with gold."

"You do well, Sir Patrick, to speak for your town, and I take no offence," said the Douglas. "I force my bounty on no one. But," he added, in a whisper to Albany, "your Grace must withdraw the king from this bloody sight, for he must know *that* to-night which will ring over broad Scotland when to-morrow dawns. This feud is ended. Yet even *I* grieve that so many brave Scottish men lie here slain, whose brands might have decided a pitched field in their country's cause."

With difficulty King Robert was withdrawn from the field; the tears running down his aged cheeks and white beard, as he conjured all around him, nobles and priests, that care should be taken for the bodies and souls of the few wounded survivors, and honourable burial rendered to the slain. The priests who were present answered zealously for both services, and redeemed their pledge faithfully and piously.

Thus ended this celebrated conflict of the North Inch of Perth. Of sixty-four brave men (the minstrels and standard bearers included) who strode manfully to the fatal field, seven alone survived, who were conveyed from thence in litters, in a case little different from the dead and dying around them, and mingled with them in the sad procession

which conveyed them from the scene of their strife. Eachin alone had left it void of wounds, and void of honour.

It remains but to say, that not a man of the Clan Quhele survived the bloody combat, except the fugitive chief; and the consequence of the defeat was the dissolution of their confederacy. The clans of which it consisted are now only matter of conjecture to the antiquary, for, after this eventful contest, they never assembled under the same banner. The Clan Chattan, on the other hand, continued to increase and flourish; and the best families of the Northern Highlands boast their descent from the race of the Cat-a-Mountain.

III

AFFAIRS OF HONOUR

1

THE FIGHT ON THE STAIRS

(FROM STANLEY WEYMAN'S "A GENTLEMAN OF FRANCE")

The Sieur de Marsac, a gentleman of old family, with no resources but his sword, is employed by Henry of Navarre on a secret mission. He is to rescue Mademoiselle de la Vire from the house of the Comte de Turenne, her guardian, who keeps her imprisoned for state reasons, and escort her in safety to the Baron de Rosny. If he is captured, his comparative obscurity will prevent his being suspected as an agent of Navarre. He effects the escape successfully, despite the treachery of his lieutenant, Fresnoy, who steals the token given him by Henry; but Mademoiselle is suspicious at the loss of the token and his appearance of poverty. At Blois she is decoyed away from him by a messenger who shows the token. De Marsac traces her to the house where she has been confined, and penetrates undiscovered to a landing at the head of the staircase. On his right, about four paces along a dark passage, he finds a door which he judges to be that of Mademoiselle's room.

So far satisfied, I scratched on the door with my finger-nails, at first softly, then with greater force, and presently I heard someone in the room rise. I felt sure that the person, whoever it was, had taken the alarm and was listening, and putting my lips to the keyhole I whispered mademoiselle's name.

A footstep crossed the room sharply, and I heard muttering just within the door. I thought I detected two voices. But I was impatient, and, getting no answer, whispered in the same manner as before, "Mademoiselle de la Vire, are you there?"

Still no answer. The muttering, too, had stopped, and all was still—in the room, and in the silent house. I tried again. "It is I, Gaston de Marsac," I said. "Do you hear? I am come to release you." I spoke as loudly as I dared, but most of the sound seemed to come back on me and wander in suspicious murmurings down the staircase.

This time, however, an exclamation of surprise rewarded me, and a voice, which I recognized at once as mademoiselle's, answered softly:

"What is it? Who is there?"

"Gaston de Marsac," I answered. "Do you need my help?"

The very brevity of her reply; the joyful sob which accompanied it, and which I detected even through the door; the wild cry of thankfulness—almost an oath—of her companion—all these assured me at once that I was welcome—welcome as I had never been before—and, so assuring me, braced me to the height of any occasion which might befall.

"Can you open the door?" I muttered. All the time I was on my knees, my attention divided between the inside of the room and the stray sounds which now and then came up to me from the hall below. "Have you the key?"

"No; we are locked in," mademoiselle answered.

I expected this. "If the door is bolted inside," I whispered, "unfasten it, if you please."

They answered that it was not, so bidding them stand back a little from it, I rose and set my shoulder against it. I hoped to be able to burst it in with only one crash, which by itself, a single sound, might not alarm the men downstairs. But my weight made no impression upon the lock, and the opposite wall being too far distant to allow me to get any purchase for my feet, I presently desisted. The closeness of the door to the jambs warned me that an attempt to prise it open would be equally futile; and for a moment I stood gazing in perplexity at the solid planks, which bid fair to baffle me to the end.

The position was, indeed, one of great difficulty, nor can I now think of any way out of it better or other than that which I adopted. Against the wall near the head of the stairs I had noticed, as I came up, a stout wooden stool. I stole out and fetched this, and setting it against the opposite wall, endeavoured in this way to get sufficient purchase for my feet. The lock still held; but, as I threw my whole weight on the door, the panel against which I leaned gave way and broke inwards with a loud, crashing sound, which echoed through the empty house, and might almost have been heard in the street outside.

It reached the ears, at any rate, of the men sitting below, and I heard them troop noisily out and stand in the hall, now talking loudly, and now listening. A minute of breathless suspense followed—it seemed a long minute; and then, to my relief, they tramped back again, and I was free to return to my task. Another thrust, directed a little lower,

would, I hoped, do the business; but to make this the more certain I knelt down and secured the stool firmly against the wall. As I rose after settling it, something else, without sound or warning, rose also, taking me completely by surprise—a man's head above the top stair, which, as it happened, faced me. His eyes met mine, and I knew I was discovered.

He turned and bundled downstairs again with a scared face, going so quickly that I could not have caught him if I would, or had had the wit to try. Of silence there was no longer need. In a few seconds the alarm would be raised. I had small time for thought. Laying myself bodily against the door, I heaved and pressed with all my strength; but whether I was careless in my haste, or the cause was other, the lock did not give. Instead the stool slipped, and I fell *with a crash on the floor at the very moment the alarm reached the men below.*

I remember that the crash of my unlucky fall seemed to release all the prisoned noises of the house. A faint scream within the room was but a prelude, lost the next moment in the roar of dismay, the clatter of weapons, and volley of oaths and cries and curses which, rolling up from below, echoed hollowly about me, as the startled knaves rushed to their weapons, and charged across the flags and up the staircase. I had space for one desperate effort. Picking myself up, I seized the stool by two of its legs and dashed it twice against the door, driving in the panel I had before splintered. But that was all. The lock held, and I had no time for a third blow. The men were already halfway up the stairs. In a breath almost they would be upon me. I flung down the useless stool and snatched up my sword, which lay unsheathed beside me. So far the matter had gone against us, but it was time for a change of weapons now, and the end was not yet. I sprang to the head of the stairs and stood there, my arm by my side and my point resting on the floor, in such an attitude of preparedness as I could compass at the moment.

For I had not been in the house all this time, as may well be supposed, without deciding what I would do in case of surprise, and exactly where I could best stand on the defensive. The flat bottom of the lamp which hung outside the passage threw a deep shadow on the spot immediately below it, while the light fell brightly on the steps beyond. Standing in the shadow I could reach the edge of the stairs with my point, and swing the blade freely, without fear of the balustrade; and here I posted myself with a certain grim satisfaction as

Fresnoy, with his three comrades behind him, came bounding up the last flight.

They were four to one, but I laughed to see how, not abruptly, but shamefacedly and by degrees, they came to a stand halfway up the flight, and looked at me, measuring the steps and the advantage which the light shining in their eyes gave me. Fresnoy's ugly face was rendered uglier by a great strip of plaister which marked the place where the hilt of my sword had struck him in our last encounter at Chizé; and this and the hatred he bore to me gave a peculiar malevolence to his look. The deaf man, Matthew, whose savage stolidity had more than once excited my anger on our journey, came next to him, the two strangers whom I had seen in the hall bringing up the rear. Of the four, these last seemed the most anxious to come to blows, and had Fresnoy not barred the way with his hand we should have crossed swords without parley.

"Halt, will you!" he cried, with an oath, thrusting one of them back. And then to me he said, "So, so, my friend! It is you, is it?"

I looked at him in silence, with a scorn which knew no bounds, and did not so much as honour him by raising my sword, though I watched him heedfully.

"What are you doing here?" he continued, with an attempt at bluster.

Still I would not answer him, or move, but stood looking down at him. After a moment of this, he grew restive, his temper being churlish and impatient at the best. Besides, I think he retained just so much of a gentleman's feelings as enabled him to understand my contempt and smart under it. He moved a step upward, his brow dark with passion.

"You beggarly son of a scarecrow!" he broke out on a sudden, adding a string of foul imprecations, "will you speak, or are you going to wait to be spitted where you stand? If we once begin, my bantam, we shall not stop until we have done your business! If you have anything to say, say it, and——" But I omit the rest of his speech, which was foul beyond the ordinary.

Still I did not move or speak, but looked at him unwavering, though it pained me to think the women heard. He made a last attempt. "Come, old friend," he said, swallowing his anger again, or pretending to do so, and speaking with a vile *bonhomie* which I knew to be treacherous, "if we come to blows we shall give you no quarter. But

one chance you shall have, for the sake of old days when we followed Condé. Go! Take the chance, and go. We will let you pass, and that broken door shall be the worst of it. That is more," he added with a curse, "than I would do for any other man in your place, M. de Marsac."

A sudden movement and a low exclamation in the room behind me showed that his words were heard there; and these sounds being followed immediately by a poise as of riving wood, mingled with the quick breathing of someone hard at work, I judged that the women were striving with the door—enlarging the opening it might be. I dared not look round, however, to see what progress they made, nor did I answer Fresnoy, save by the same silent contempt, but stood watching the men before me with the eye of a fencer about to engage. And I know nothing more keen, more vigilant, more steadfast than that.

It was well I did, for without signal or warning the group wavered a moment, as though retreating, and the next instant precipitated itself upon me. Fortunately, only two could engage me at once, and Fresnoy, I noticed, was not of the two who dashed forward up the steps. One of the strangers forced himself to the front, and, taking the lead, pressed me briskly, Matthew seconding him in appearance, while really watching for an opportunity of running in and stabbing me at close quarters, a manœuvre I was not slow to detect.

That first bout lasted half a minute only. A fierce exultant joy ran through me as the steel rang and grated, and I found that I had not mistaken the strength of wrist or position. The men were mine. They hampered one another on the stairs, and fought in fetters, being unable to advance or retreat, to lunge with freedom, or give back without fear. I apprehended greater danger from Matthew than from my actual opponent, and presently, watching my opportunity, disarmed the latter by a strong parade, and sweeping Matthew's sword aside by the same movement, slashed him across the forehead; then, drawing back a step, gave my first opponent the point. He fell in a heap on the floor, as good as dead, and Matthew, dropping his sword, staggered backwards and downwards into Fresnoy's arms.

"Bonne Foi! France et Bonne Foi!" It seemed to me that I had not spoken, that I had plied steel in grimmest silence; and yet the cry still rang and echoed in the roof as I lowered my point, and stood looking grimly down at them. Fresnoy's face was disfigured with rage and chagrin. They were now but two to one, for Matthew,

though his wound was slight, was disabled by the blood which ran down into his eyes and blinded him. "France et Bonne Foi!"

"Bonne Foi and good sword!" cried a voice behind me. And looking swiftly round, I saw mademoiselle's face thrust through the hole in the door. Her eyes sparkled with a fierce light, her lips were red beyond the ordinary, and her hair, loosened and thrown into disorder by her exertions, fell in thick masses about her white cheeks, and gave her the aspect of a war-witch, such as they tell of in my country of Brittany. "Good sword!" she cried again, and clapped her hands.

"But better board, mademoiselle!" I answered gaily. Like most of the men of my province, I am commonly melancholic, but I have the habit of growing witty at such times as these. "Now, M. Fresnoy," I continued, "I am waiting your convenience. Must I put on my cloak to keep myself warm?"

He answered by a curse, and stood looking at me irresolutely. "If you will come down," he said.

"Send your man away and I will come," I answered briskly. "There is space on the landing, and a moderate light. But I must be quick. Mademoiselle and I are due elsewhere, and we are late already."

Still he hesitated. Still he looked at the man lying at his feet—who had stretched himself out and passed, quietly enough, a minute before—and stood dubious, the most pitiable picture of cowardice and malice—he being ordinarily a stout man—I ever saw. I called him poltroon and white-feather, and was considering whether I had not better go down to him, seeing that our time must be up, and Simon would be quitting his post, when a cry behind me caused me to turn, and I saw that mademoiselle was no longer looking through the opening in the door.

Alarmed on her behalf, as I reflected that there might be other doors to the room, and the men have other accomplices in the house, I sprang to the door to see, but had barely time to send a single glance round the interior—which showed me only that the room was still occupied—before Fresnoy, taking advantage of my movement and of my back being turned, dashed up the stairs, with his comrade at his heels, and succeeded in penning me into the narrow passage where I stood.

I had scarcely time, indeed, to turn and put myself on guard before he thrust at me. Nor was that all. The superiority in position no

longer lay with me. I found myself fighting between walls close to the opening in the door, through which the light fell athwart my eyes, baffling and perplexing me. Fresnoy was not slow to see the aid this gave him, and pressed me hard and desperately; so that we played for a full minute at close quarters, thrusting and parrying, neither of us having room to use the edge, or time to utter word or prayer.

At this game we were so evenly matched that for a time the end was hard to tell. Presently, however, there came a change. My opponent's habit of wild living suited ill with a prolonged bout, and as his strength and breath failed and he began to give ground I discerned I had only to wear him out to have him at my mercy. He felt this himself, and even by that light I saw the sweat spring in great drops to his forehead, saw the terror grow in his eyes. Already I was counting him a dead man and the victory mine, when something flashed behind his blade, and his comrade's poniard, whizzing past his shoulder, struck me fairly on the chin, staggering me and hurling me back dizzy and half-stunned, uncertain what had happened to me.

Sped an inch lower it would have done its work and finished mine. Even as it was, my hand going up as I reeled back gave Fresnoy an opening, of which he was not slow to avail himself. He sprang forward, lunging at me furiously, and would have run me through there and then, and ended the matter, had not his foot, as he advanced, caught in the stool, which still lay against the wall. He stumbled, his point missed my hip by a hair's breadth, and he himself fell all his length on the floor, his rapier breaking off short at the hilt.

His one remaining backer ~~stayed to cast a look at him, and that~~ was all. The man fled, and I chased him as far as the head of the stairs; where I left him, assured by the speed and agility he displayed in clearing flight after flight that I had nothing to fear from him. Fresnoy lay, apparently stunned, and completely at my mercy. I stood an instant looking down at him, in two minds whether I should not run him through. But the memory of old days, when he had played his part in more honourable fashion and shown a coarse good-fellowship in the field, held my hand; and flinging a curse at him, I turned in anxious haste to the door, the centre of all this bloodshed and commotion. The light still shone through the breach in the panel, but for some minutes—since Fresnoy's rush up the stairs, indeed—I had heard no sound from this quarter. Now, looking in with apprehensions which grew with the continuing silence, I learned the reason. The room was empty!

THE KING'S MUSKETEERS AND THE CARDINAL'S GUARDS

(FROM "THE THREE MUSKETEERS," BY ALEXANDRE DUMAS)

The young Gascon, D'Artagnan, newly come to Paris to join De Treville's musketeers, quarrels with the three comrades for typical reasons, —with the elegant Athos on a point of breeding, with Porthos by wounding his vanity, and with Aramis by endangering an intrigue of that most unreverend student of theology. He arrives at his rendezvous, engaged to fight with each in turn, and consoling himself that if he dies, he will at least be killed by a musketeer.

ATHOS, who still suffered grievously from his wound, though it had been dressed by M. de Treville's surgeon at nine, was seated on a post and waiting for his adversary with that placid countenance and that noble air which never forsook him. At sight of D'Artagnan, he arose and came politely a few steps to meet him. The latter, on his side, saluted his adversary with hat in hand, and his feather even touching the ground.

"Monsieur," said Athos, "I have engaged two of my friends as seconds; but these two friends are not yet come, at which I am astonished, as it is not at all their custom to be behindhand."

"I have no seconds on my part, monsieur," said D'Artagnan; "for, having only arrived yesterday in Paris, I as yet know no one but M. de Treville, to whom I was recommended by my father, who has the honour to be, in some degree, one of his friends."

Athos reflected for an instant.

"You know no one but M. de Treville?" he asked.

"No, monsieur; I only know him."

"Well, but then," continued Athos, speaking partly to himself, "well, but then, if I kill you, I shall have the air of a boy-slayer."

"Not too much so," replied D'Artagnan, with a bow that was not deficient in dignity, "not too much so, since you do me the honour to

draw a sword with me whilst suffering from a wound which is very painful."

"Very painful, upon my word, and you hurt me devilishly, I can tell you; but I will take the left hand—I usually do so in such circumstances. Do not fancy that I favour you—I use both hands equally; and it will be even a disadvantage to you—a left-handed man is very troublesome to people who are not used to it. I regret I did not inform you sooner of this circumstance."

"You are truly, monsieur," said D'Artagnan, bowing again, "of a courtesy, for which, I assure you, I am very grateful."

"You confuse me," replied Athos, with his gentlemanly air; "let us talk of something else, if you please. Ah, *sang Dieu!* how you have hurt me! my shoulder quite burns."

"If you would permit me——" said D'Artagnan, with timidity.

"What, monsieur?"

"I have a miraculous balsam for wounds—a balsam given to me by my mother, and of which I have made a trial upon myself."

"Well?"

"Well, I am sure that in less than three days this balsam would cure you; and at the end of three days, when you would be cured—well, sir, it would still do me a great honour to be your man."

D'Artagnan spoke these words with a simplicity that did honour to his courtesy, without throwing the least doubt upon his courage.

"*Pardieu*, monsieur!" said Athos, "that's a proposition that pleases me; not that I accept it, but it savours of the gentleman a league off. It was thus that spoke the gallant knights of the time of Charlemagne, in whom every knight ought to seek his model. Unfortunately, we do not live in the time of the great emperor; we live in the times of Monsieur the Cardinal, and three days hence, however well the secret might be guarded, it would be known, I say, that we were to fight, and our combat would be prevented. I think these fellows will never come."

"If you are in haste, monsieur," said D'Artagnan, with the same simplicity with which a moment before he had proposed to him to put off the duel for three days, "if you are in haste, and if it be your will to despatch me at once, do not inconvenience yourself—I am ready."

"Well, that is again well said," cried Athos, with a gracious nod to D'Artagnan, that did not come from a man without brains, and certainly not from a man without a heart. "Monsieur, I love men of your kidney, and I foresee plainly that, if we don't kill each other, I shall hereafter have much pleasure in your conversation. We will wait for these

gentlemen, if you please; I have plenty of time, and it will be more correct. Ah! here is one of them, I think."

In fact, at the end of the Rue Vaugirard the gigantic form of Porthos came in sight.

"What!" cried D'Artagnan, "is your first second M. Porthos?"

"Yes. Is that unpleasant to you?"

"Oh, not at all."

"And here comes the other."

D'Artagnan turned in the direction pointed to by Athos, and perceived Aramis.

"What!" cried he, in an accent of greater astonishment than before, "is your second witness M. Aramis?"

"Doubtless he is. Are you not aware that we are never seen one without the others, and that we are called in the musketeers and the guards, at court and in the city, Athos, Porthos, and Aramis, or the three inseparables? And yet, as you come from Dax or Pau——"

"From Tarbes," said D'Artagnan.

"It is probable you are ignorant of this circumstance," said Athos.

"*Ma foi!*" replied D'Artagnan, "you are well named, gentlemen, and my adventure, if it should make any noise, will prove at least that your union is not founded upon contrasts."

In the meantime Porthos had come up, waved his hand to Athos, and then turning towards D'Artagnan, stood quite astonished.

Permit us to say, in passing, that he had changed his baldrick, and was without his cloak.

"Ah, ha!" said he, "what does this mean?"

"This is the gentleman I am going to fight with," said Athos, pointing to D'Artagnan with his hand, and saluting him with the same gesture.

"Why, it is with him I am also going to fight," said Porthos.

"But not before one o'clock," replied D'Artagnan.

"Well, and I also am going to fight with that gentleman," said Aramis, coming on to the ground as he spoke.

"But not till two o'clock," said D'Artagnan, with the same calmness.

"But what are you going to fight about, Athos?" asked Aramis.

"*Ma foi!* I don't very well know; he hurt my shoulder. And you, Porthos?"

"*Ma foi!* I am going to fight, because I am going to fight," answered Porthos, colouring deeply.

Athos, whose keen eye lost nothing, perceived a faintly sly smile pass over the lips of the young Gascon, as he replied:

"We had a short discussion upon dress."

"And you, Aramis?" asked Athos.

"Oh, ours is a theological quarrel," replied Aramis, making a sign to D'Artagnan to keep secret the cause of their dispute.

Athos saw a second smile on the lips of D'Artagnan.

"Indeed?" said Athos.

"Yes; a passage of St. Augustine upon which we could not agree," said the Gascon.

"By Jove! this is a clever fellow," murmured Athos.

"And now you are all assembled, gentlemen," said D'Artagnan, "permit me to offer you my excuses."

At this word *excuses*, a cloud passed over the brow of Athos, a haughty smile curled the lip of Porthos, and a negative sign was the reply of Aramis.

"You do not understand me, gentlemen," said D'Artagnan, throwing up his head, the sharp and bold lines of which were at the moment gilded by a bright sun ray. "I ask to be excused in case I should not be able to discharge my debt to all three; for M. Athos has the right to kill me first, which must abate your valour in your own estimation, M. Porthos, and render yours almost null, M. Aramis. And now, gentlemen, I repeat, excuse me, but on that account only, and—guard!"

At these words, with the most gallant air possible, D'Artagnan drew his sword.

The blood had mounted to the head of D'Artagnan, and at that moment he would have drawn his sword against all the musketeers in the kingdom, as willingly as he now did against Athos, Porthos, and Aramis.

It was a quarter past midday. The sun was in its zenith, and the spot chosen for the theatre of the duel was exposed to its full power.

"It is very hot," said Athos, drawing his sword in his turn, "and yet I cannot take off my doublet; for I just now felt my wound begin to bleed again, and I should not like to annoy *monsieur* with the sight of blood which he has not drawn from me himself."

"That is true, *monsieur*," replied D'Artagnan, "and, whether drawn by myself or another, I assure you I shall always view with regret the blood of so brave a gentleman; I will therefore fight in my doublet, as you do."

"Come, come, enough of compliments," cried Porthos; "please to remember we are waiting for our turns."

"Speak for yourself, when you are inclined to utter such solecisms," interrupted Aramis. "For my part, I think what they say is very well said, and quite worthy of two gentlemen."

"When you please, monsieur," said Athos, putting himself on guard.

"I waited your orders," said D'Artagnan, crossing swords.

But scarcely had the two rapiers sounded on meeting, when a company of the guards of his Eminence, commanded by M. de Jussac, turned the angle of the convent.

"The cardinal's guards! the cardinal's guards!" cried Aramis and Porthos at the same time. "Sheathe swords! gentlemen! sheathe swords!"

But it was too late. The two combatants had been seen in a position which left no doubt of their intentions.

"Hola!" cried Jussac, advancing towards them, and making a sign to his men to do so likewise, "hola! musketeers, fighting here, then, are you? And the edicts, what is become of them?"

"You are very generous, gentlemen of the guards," said Athos, with acrimony, for Jussac was one of the aggressors of the preceding day. "If we were to see you fighting, I can assure you that we would make no effort to prevent you. Leave us alone then, and you will enjoy a little amusement without cost to yourselves."

"Gentlemen," said Jussac, "it is with great regret that I pronounce the thing impossible. Duty before everything. Sheathe, then, if you please, and follow us."

"Monsieur," said Aramis, parodying Jussac, "it would afford us great pleasure to obey your polite invitation, if it depended upon ourselves; but, unfortunately, the thing is impossible: M. de Treville has forbidden it. Pass on your way, then; it is the best thing you can do."

This raillery exasperated Jussac.

"We will charge upon you, then," said he, "if you disobey."

"There are five of them," said Athos, half aloud, "and we are but three; we shall be beaten again, and must die on the spot, for, on my part, I declare I will never appear before the captain again as a conquered man."

Athos, Porthos, and Aramis instantly closed in, and Jussac drew up his soldiers.

This short interval was sufficient to determine D'Artagnan on the part he was to take; it was one of those events which decide the life of a man; it was a choice between the king and the cardinal; the choice made, it must be persisted in. To fight was to disobey the law, to risk

his head, to make at once an enemy of a minister more powerful than the king himself; all this the young man perceived, and yet, to his praise we speak it, he did not hesitate a second. Turning towards Athos and his friends,—

"Gentlemen," said he, "allow me to correct your words, if you please. You said you were but three, but it appears to me we are four."

"But you are not one of us," said Porthos.

"That's true," replied D'Artagnan; "I do not wear the uniform, but I am in spirit. My heart is that of a musketeer; I feel it, monsieur, and that impels me on."

"Withdraw, young man," cried Jussac, who, doubtless, by his gestures and the expression of his countenance, had guessed D'Artagnan's design. "You may retire, we allow you to do so. Save your skin; begone quickly."

D'Artagnan did not move.

"Decidedly you are a pretty fellow," said Athos, pressing the young man's hand.

"Come, come, decide one way or the other," replied Jussac.

"Well," said Porthos to Aramis, "we must do something."

"Monsieur is very generous," said Athos.

But all three reflected upon the youth of D'Artagnan, and dreaded his inexperience.

"We should only be three, one of whom is wounded, with the addition of a boy," resumed Athos, "and yet it will be not the less said we were four men."

"Yes, but to yield!" said Porthos.

"That's rather difficult," replied Athos.

D'Artagnan comprehended whence a part of this irresolution arose.

"Try me, gentlemen," said he, "and I swear to you by my honour that I will not go hence if we are conquered."

"What is your name, my brave fellow?" said Athos.

"D'Artagnan, monsieur."

"Well, then! Athos, Porthos, Aramis, and D'Artagnan, forward!" cried Athos.

"Come, gentlemen, have you made your minds up?" cried Jussac, for the third time.

"It is done, gentlemen," said Athos.

"And what do you mean to do?" asked Jussac.

"We are about to have the honour of charging you," replied Aramis, lifting his hat with one hand, and drawing his sword with the other.

"Oh! you resist, do you!" cried Jussac.

"*Sang Dieu!* does that astonish you?"

And the nine combatants rushed upon each other with a fury which, however, did not exclude a certain degree of method.

Athos fixed upon a certain Cahusac, a favourite of the cardinal's; Porthos had Bicarat, and Aramis found himself opposed to two adversaries. As to D'Artagnan, he sprang towards Jussac himself.

The heart of the young Gascon beat as if it would burst through his side, not from fear, God be thanked,—he had not the shade of it,—but with emulation; he fought like a furious tiger, turning ten times round his adversary, and changing his ground and his guard twenty times, Jussac was, as was then said, a fine blade, and had had much practice; nevertheless, it required all his skill to defend himself against an adversary, who, active and energetic, departed every instant from received rules, attacking him on all sides at once, and yet parrying like a man who had the greatest respect for his own epidermis.

This contest at length exhausted Jussac's patience. Furious at being held in check by him whom he had considered a boy, he became warm, and began to commit faults. D'Artagnan, who, though wanting in practice, had a profound theory, redoubled his agility. Jussac, anxious to put an end to this, springing forward, aimed a terrible thrust at his adversary, but the latter parried it; and whilst Jussac was recovering himself, glided like a serpent beneath his blade, and passed his sword through his body. Jussac fell like a dead mass.

D'Artagnan then cast an anxious and rapid glance over the field of battle.

Aramis had killed one of his adversaries, but the other pressed him warmly. Nevertheless, Aramis was in a good situation, and able to defend himself.

Bicarat and Porthos had just made counter-hits; Porthos had received a thrust through his arm, and Bicarat one through his thigh. But neither of the wounds was serious, and they only fought the more earnestly for them.

Athos, wounded again by Cahusac, became evidently paler, but did not give way a foot: he had only changed his sword-hand, and fought with his left hand.

According to the laws of duelling at that period, D'Artagnan was at liberty to assist the one he pleased. Whilst he was endeavouring to find out which of his companions stood in greatest need, he caught a glance from Athos. This glance was of sublime eloquence. Athos would

have died rather than appeal for help; but he could look, and with that look ask assistance. D'Artagnan interpreted it; with a terrible bound, he sprang to the side of Cahusac, crying: "To me, monsieur! guard, or I will slay you!"

Cahusac turned; it was time, for Athos, whose great courage alone supported him, sank upon his knee.

"*Sang Dieu!*" cried he to D'Artagnan, "do not kill him, young man, I beg of you; I have an old affair to settle with him, when I am cured and sound again. Disarm him only—make sure of his sword; that's it, that's it! well done! very well done!"

This exclamation was drawn from Athos by seeing the sword of Cahusac fly twenty paces from him. D'Artagnan and Cahusac sprang forward at the same instant, the one to recover, the other to obtain the sword; but D'Artagnan, being the more active, reached it first, and placed his foot upon it.

Cahusac immediately ran to that of one of the guards that Aramis had killed, and returned towards D'Artagnan; but on his way he met Athos, who, during this relief which D'Artagnan had procured him, had recovered his breath, and who, for fear that D'Artagnan should kill his enemy, wished to resume the fight.

D'Artagnan perceived that it would be disobliging Athos not to leave him alone; and in a few minutes Cahusac fell, with a sword-thrust through his throat.

At the same instant Aramis placed his sword-point on the breast of his fallen enemy, and compelled him to ask for mercy.

There only then remained Porthos and Bicarat. Porthos made a thousand fanfaronnades, asking Bicarat what o'clock it could be, and offering him his compliments upon his brother's having just obtained a company in the regiment of Navarre; but, joke as he might, he gained no advantage—Bicarat was one of those iron men who never fall dead.

Nevertheless, it was necessary to put an end to the affair. The watch might come up, and take all the combatants, wounded or not, royalists or cardinalists. Athos, Aramis, and D'Artagnan surrounded Bicarat, and required him to surrender. Though alone against all, and with a wound in his thigh, Bicarat wished to hold out; but Jussac, who had risen upon his elbow, cried out to him to yield. Bicarat was a Gascon, as D'Artagnan was; he turned a deaf ear, and contented himself with laughing; and between two parries, finding time to point to a spot of earth with his sword,—

"Here," cried he, parodying a verse of the Bible, "here will Bicarat die, the only one of those who are with him!"

"But there are four against you; leave off, I command you."

"Ah! if you command me, that's another thing," said Bicarat; "you being my brigadier, it is my duty to obey."

And, springing backward, he broke his sword across his knee, to avoid the necessity of surrendering it, threw the pieces over the convent wall, and crossed his arms, whistling a cardinalist air.

Bravery is always respected, even in an enemy. The musketeers saluted Bicarat with their swords, and returned them to their sheaths. D'Artagnan did the same; then, assisted by Bicarat, the only one left standing, he bore Jussac, Cahusac, and that one of Aramis's adversaries who was only wounded, under the porch of the convent. The fourth, *as we have said, was dead.* They then rang the bell, and, carrying away four swords out of five, they took their road, intoxicated with joy, towards the hotel of M. de Treville.

They walked arm in arm, occupying the whole width of the street, and accosting every musketeer they met, so that it in the end became a triumphal march. The heart of D'Artagnan swam in delight; he marched between Athos and Porthos, pressing them tenderly.

"If I am not yet a musketeer," said he to his new friends, as he passed through the gateway of M. de Treville's hotel, "at least I have entered upon my apprenticeship, haven't I?"

YOUNG RUPERT AND THE PLAY-ACTOR

(FROM ANTHONY HOPE'S "RUPERT OF HENTZAU")

Since the days of Scott and Stevenson, there have been no books written that more truly recapture the spirit of adventure than "The Prisoner of Zenda" and its sequel "Rupert of Hentzau." Most of us were brought up on the story of Rudolf Rassendyll, the young Englishman who, through his remarkable resemblance to the King of Ruritania, was able to outwit Duke Michael and his gang, when they made the king a captive in the castle of Zenda to prevent his coronation. Rudolf was crowned in his stead, by the aid of the faithful Colonel Sapt and Count Fritz von Tarlenheim, and afterwards, when the king had been freed through their united endeavours, Rudolf left Ruritania and the beautiful Princess Flavia, with whom he had fallen in love. She stayed, for the sake of the people, and became Queen, but every year, as a memento of her affection and gratitude, she sent him a box containing a short message and a single red rose.

On the third anniversary, however, she wrote him a letter, which was entrusted to the care of Fritz von Tarlenheim. But by the treachery of his valet Bauer, von Tarlenheim was robbed, and the letter fell into the hands of Rupert of Hentzau, the only member of Duke Michael's gang who had escaped Rudolf at the castle of Zenda. Rupert had since been in exile, and now hoped to reinstate himself in the king's favour by bringing before him a proof of Queen Flavia's love for the Englishman. Armed with the letter, Rupert found the king at his hunting-lodge, and in the scuffle which followed their meeting, the king was killed.

Rassendyll was once more able to impersonate the monarch in Strelsau, the capital, before the news of the murder arrived. Anxious for a final reckoning, he tracked Rupert to the house where the plotter lay in hiding.

THERE rises often before my mind the picture of young Rupert, standing where Rischenheim left him, awaiting the return of his messenger and watching for some sign that should declare to Strelsau the death of its King which his own hand had wrought. His image is one that memory

holds clear and distinct, though time may blur the shape of greater and better men; and the position in which he was that morning gives play enough to the imagination. Save for Rischenheim—a broken reed—and Bauer, who was gone none knew where, he stood alone against a kingdom which he had robbed of its head and a band of resolute men who would know no rest and no security so long as he lived. For protection he had only a quick brain, his courage, and his secret. Yet he could not fly—he was without resources till his cousin furnished them—and at any moment his opponents might find themselves able to declare the King's death and raise the city in hue and cry after him. Such men do not repent; but it may be that he regretted the enterprise which had led him on so far and forced on him a deed so momentous; yet to those who knew him it seems more likely that the smile broadened on his firm full lips as he looked down on the unconscious city. Well, I daresay he would have been too much for me; but I wish I had been the man to find him there. He would not have had it so; for I believe that he asked no better than to cross swords again with Rudolf Rassendyll and set his fortunes on the issue.

Down below, the old woman was cooking a stew for her dinner, now and then grumbling to herself that the Count of Luzau-Rischenheim was so long away, and Bauer, the rascal, drunk in some pothouse. The kitchen door stood open, and through it could be seen the girl Rosa, busily scrubbing the tiled floor; her colour was high and her eyes bright; from time to time she paused in her task, and, raising her head, seemed to listen. The time at which the King needed her was past, but the King had not come. How little the old woman knew for whom she listened! All her talk had been of Bauer—why Bauer did not come, and what could have befallen him. It was grand to hold the King's secret for him, and she would hold it with her life; for he had been kind and gracious to her, and he was her man of all the men in Strclsau. Bauer was a stumpy fellow; the Count of Hentzau was handsome, handsome as the devil; but the King was her man. And the King had trusted her; she would die before hurt should come to him.

There were wheels in the street—quick-rolling wheels. They seemed to stop a few doors away, then to roll on again past the house. The girl's head was raised; the old woman, engrossed in the stew, took no heed. The girl's straining ear caught a rapid step outside. Then it came—the knock, the sharp knock followed by five light ones. The old woman heard now: dropping her spoon into the pot she lifted the mess off the fire and turned round, saying:

"There's the rogue at last! Open the door for him, Rosa."

Before she spoke Rosa had darted down the passage. The door opened and shut again. The old woman waddled to the threshold of the kitchen. The passage and the shop were dark behind closed shutters; but the figure by the girl's side was taller than Bauer's.

"Who's there?" cried Mother Holf sharply. "The shop's shut to-day; you can't come in."

"But I am in," came the answer, and Rudolf stepped towards her. The girl followed a pace behind, her hands clasped and her eyes alight with excitement. "Don't you know me?" asked Rudolf, standing opposite the old woman and smiling down on her.

There, in the dim light of the low-roofed passage, Mother Holf was fairly puzzled. She knew the story of Mr. Rassendyll; she knew that he was again in Ruritania, it was no surprise to her that he should be in Strelsau; but she did not know that Rupert had killed the King, and she had not seen the King close at hand since his illness, and his beard impaired what had been a perfect likeness. In fine she could not tell whether it were indeed the King who spoke to her or his counterfeit.

"Who are you?" she asked, curt and blunt in her confusion.

The girl broke in with an amused laugh.

"Why, it's the——"

She paused. Perhaps the King's identity was a secret.

Rudolf nodded to her.

"Tell her who I am," said he.

"Why, mother, it's the King," whispered Rosa, laughing and blushing. "The King, mother."

"Aye, if the King's alive, I'm the King," said Rudolf.

I suppose he wanted to find out how much the old woman knew.

She made no answer, but stared up at his face. In her bewilderment she forgot to ask how he had learnt the signal that gained him admission.

"I've come to see the Count of Hentzau," Rudolf continued.

"Take me to him at once."

The old woman was across his path in a moment, all defiant, arms akimbo.

"Nobody can see the Count. He's not here," she blurted out.

"What, can't the King see him? Not even the King?"

"King?" she cried, peering at him. "Are you the King?"

Rosa burst out laughing.

"Mother, you must have seen the King a hundred times," she laughed.

"The King or his ghost—what does it matter?" said Rudolf lightly. The old woman drew back with an appearance of sudden alarm.

"His ghost? Is he——?"

"His ghost!" rang out in the girl's merry laugh. "Why, here's the King himself, mother. You don't look much like a ghost, sir."

Mother Holf's face was livid now, and her eyes staring fixedly. Perhaps it shot into her brain that something had happened to the King, and that this man had come because of it—this man who was indeed the image, and might have been the spirit of the King. She leant against the doorpost, her broad bosom heaving under her scanty stuff gown. Yet still—was it not the King?

"God help us!" she muttered in fear and bewilderment.

"He helps us, never fear," said Rudolf Rassendyll. "Where is Count Rupert?"

The girl had caught alarm from her mother's agitation.

"He's upstairs in the attic at the top of the house, sir," she whispered in frightened tones, with a glance that fled from her mother's terrified face to Rudolf's set eyes and steady smile.

What she said was enough for him. He slipped by the old woman and began to mount the stairs.

The two watched him, Mother Holf as though fascinated, the girl alarmed but still triumphant; she had done what the King bade her. Rudolf turned the corner of the first landing and disappeared from their sight. The old woman, swearing and muttering, stumbled back into her kitchen, put her stew on the fire, and began to stir it, her eyes set on the flames and careless of the pot. The girl watched her mother for a moment, wondering how she could think of the stew, not guessing that she turned the spoon without a thought of what she did; then she began to crawl, quickly but noiselessly, up the staircase in the track of Rudolf Rassendyll. She looked back once: the old woman stirred with a monotonous circular movement of her fat arm. Rosa, bent half-double, skimmed upstairs, till she came in sight of the King whom she was so proud to serve. He was on the top landing now, outside the door of the large attic where Rupert of Hentzau was lodged. She saw him lay his hand on the latch of the door; his other hand rested in the pocket of his coat. From the room no sound came; Rupert may have heard the step outside and stood motionless to listen. Rudolf opened the door and walked in. The girl darted breathlessly up the remaining steps, and coming to the door just as it swung back on the latch, crouched down by it, listening to what passed within, catching glimpses of forms

and movements through the chinks of the crazy hinge and the crevices where the wood of the panel had sprung and left a narrow eyehole for her absorbed gazing.

Rupert of Hentzau had no thought of ghosts, the men he killed lay still where they fell, and slept where they were buried. And he had no wonder at the sight of Rudolf Rassendyll. It told him no more than that Rischenheim's errand had fallen out ill, at which he was not surprised, and that his old enemy was again in his path, at which (as I verily believe) he was more glad than sorry. As Rudolf entered, he had been half-way between window and table; he came forward to the table now, and stood leaning the points of two fingers on the unpolished, dirty wood.

"Ah, the play-actor!" said he, with a gleam of his teeth and a toss of his curls, while his second hand, like Mr. Rassendyll's, rested in the pocket of his coat.

Mr. Rassendyll himself had confessed that in old days it went against the grain with him when Rupert called him a play-actor. He was a little older now, and his temper more difficult to stir.

"Yes, the play-actor," he answered, smiling. "With a shorter part this time, though."

"What part to-day? Isn't it the old one, the King with a pasteboard crown?" asked Rupert, sitting down on the table. "Faith, we shall do handsomely in Ruritania: you have a pasteboard crown, and I (humble man though I am) have given the other one a heavenly crown. What a brave show! But perhaps I tell you news?"

"No, I know what you've done."

"I take no credit. It was more the dog's doing than mine," said Rupert carelessly. "However, there it is, and dead he is, and there's an end of it. What's your business, play-actor?"

At the repetition of this last word, to her so mysterious, the girl outside pressed her eyes more eagerly to the chink and strained her ears to listen more sedulously. And what did the Count mean by the "other one" and "heavenly crown"?

"Why not call me King?" asked Rudolf.

"They call you that in Strelsau?"

"Those that know I'm here."

"And they are——?"

"Some few score."

"And thus," said Rupert, waving an arm towards the window, "the town is quiet and the flags fly."

"You've been waiting to see them lowered?"

"A man likes to have some notice taken of what he has done," Rupert complained. "However, I can get them lowered when I will."

"By telling your news? Would that be good for yourself?"

"*Forgive me—not that way.* Since the King has two lives, it is but in nature that he should have two deaths."

"And when he has undergone the second?"

"I shall live at peace, my friend, on a certain source of income that I possess." He tapped his breast-pocket with a slight defiant laugh. "In these days," said he, "even queens must be careful about their letters. We live in moral times."

"You don't share the responsibility for it," said Rudolf, smiling.

"I make my little protest. But what's your business, play-actor, for I think you're rather tiresome?"

Rudolf grew grave. He advanced towards the table and spoke in low, serious tones.

"My lord, you're alone in this matter now. Rischenheim is a prisoner; your rogue Bauer I encountered last night and broke his head."

"Ah, you did?"

"You have what you know of in your hands. If you yield, on my honour I will save your life."

"You don't desire my blood, then, most forgiving play-actor?"

"So much, that I daren't fail to offer you life," answered Rudolf Rassendyll. "Come, sir, your plan has failed: give up the letter."

Rupert looked at him thoughtfully.

"You'll see me safe off if I give it you?" he asked.

"I'll prevent your death. Yes, and I'll see you safe."

"Where to?"

"To a fortress, where a trustworthy gentleman will guard you."

"For how long, my dear friend?"

"I hope for many years, my dear Count."

"In fact, I suppose, as long as——?"

"Heaven leaves you to the world, Count. It's impossible to set you free."

"That's the offer, then?"

"The extreme limit of indulgence," answered Rudolf.

Rupert burst into a laugh, half of defiance, yet touched with the ring of true amusement. Then he lit a cigarette, and sat puffing and smiling.

"I should wrong you by straining your kindness so far," said he; and in wanton insolence, seeking again to show Mr. Rassendyll the mean esteem in which he held him and the weariness his presence was, he

raised his arms and stretched them above his head, as a man does in the fatigue of tedium. "Heigho!" he yawned.

But he had overshot the mark this time. With a sudden swift bound Rudolf was upon him; his hands gripped Rupert's wrists, and with his greater strength he bent back the Count's pliant body till trunk and head lay flat on the table. Neither man spoke; their eyes met; each heard the other's breathing and felt the vapour of it on his face. The girl outside had seen the movement of Rudolf's figure, but her cranny did not serve to show her the two where they were now; she knelt on her knees in ignorant suspense. Slowly and with patient force Rudolf began to work his enemy's arms towards one another. Rupert had read his design in his eyes, and resisted with tense muscles. It seemed as though his arms must crack; but at last they moved. Inch by inch they were driven closer; now the elbows almost touched; now the wrists joined in reluctant contact. The sweat broke out on the Count's brow, and stood in large drops on Rudolf's. Now the wrists were side by side, and slowly the long sinewy fingers of Rudolf's right hand, that held one wrist already in their vice, began to creep round the other. The grip seemed to have half numbed Rupert's arms, and his struggles grew fainter. Round both wrists the sinewy fingers climbed and coiled; gradually and timidly the grasp of the other hand was relaxed and withdrawn. Would the one hold both? With a great spasm of effort Rupert put it to the proof. The smile that bent Mr. Rassendyll's lips gave the answer. He could hold both, with one hand he could hold both; not for long, no, but for an instant. And then, in the instant, his left hand, free at last, shot to the breast of the Count's coat. It was the same that he had worn at the hunting-lodge, and was ragged and torn from the boarhound's teeth. Rudolf tore it further open, and his hand dashed in.

"God's curse on you!" snarled Rupert of Hentzau.

But Mr. Rassendyll still smiled. Then he drew out a letter. A glance at it showed him the Queen's seal. As he glanced Rupert made another effort. The one hand, wearied out, gave way, and Mr. Rassendyll had no more than time to spring away, holding his prize. The next moment he had his revolver in his hand—none too soon, for Rupert of Hentzau's barrel faced him, and they stood thus, opposite to one another, with no more than three or four feet between the mouths of their weapons.

There is, indeed, much that may be said against Rupert of Hentzau, the truth about him well-nigh forbidding that charity of judgment which we are taught to observe towards all men. But neither I nor any man

who knew him ever found in him a shrinking from danger or a fear of death. It was no feeling such as these, but rather a cool calculation of chances that now stayed his hand. Even if he were victorious in the duel, and both did not die, yet the noise of firearms would greatly decrease his chances of escape. Moreover, he was a noted swordsman, and conceived that he was Mr. Rassendyll's superior in that exercise. The steel offered him at once a better prospect of victory and more hope of a safe flight. So he did not pull his trigger, but, maintaining his aim the while, said:

"I'm not a street bully, and I don't excel in a rough-and-tumble. Will you fight now like a gentleman? There's a pair of blades in the case yonder."

Mr. Rassendyll, in his turn, was keenly alive to the peril that still hung over the Queen. To kill Rupert would not serve her if he himself also were shot and left dead, or so helpless that he could not destroy the letter; and while Rupert's revolver was at his heart he could not tear it up nor reach the fire that burnt on the other side of the room. Nor did he fear the result of a trial with steel, for he had kept himself in practice and improved his skill since the days when he came first to Strelsau.

"As you will," said he. "Provided we settle the matter here and now, the manner is the same to me."

"Put your revolver on the table, then, and I'll lay mine beside it."

"I beg your pardon," smiled Rudolf, "but you must lay yours down first."

"I'm to trust you, it seems, but you won't trust me!"

"Precisely. You know you can trust me; you know that I can't trust you."

A sudden flush swept over Rupert of Hentzau's face. There were moments when he saw, in the mirror of another's face or words, the estimation in which honourable men held him; and I believe that he hated Mr. Rassendyll most fiercely, not for thwarting his enterprise, but because he had more power than any other man to show him that picture. His brows knit in a frown and his lips shut tight.

"Aye, but though you won't fire, you'll destroy the letter," he sneered. "I know your fine distinctions."

"Again I beg your pardon. You know very well that, although all Strelsau were at the door, I wouldn't touch the letter."

With an angry muttered oath Rupert flung his revolver on the table. Rudolf came forward and laid his by it. Then he took up both, and, crossing to the mantelpiece, laid them there; between them he placed the

Queen's letter. A bright blaze burnt in the stove; it needed but the slightest motion of his hand to set the letter beyond all danger. But he placed it carefully on the mantelpiece, and, with a slight smile on his face, turned to Rupert, saying: "Now shall we resume the bout that Fritz von Tarlenheim interrupted in the forest of Zenda?"

All this while they had been speaking in subdued accents, resolution in one, anger in the other, keeping the voice to an even deliberate lowness. The girl outside caught only a word here and there; but now suddenly the flash of steel gleamed on her eyes through the crevice of the hinge. She gave a sudden gasp, and, pressing her face closer to the opening, listened and looked. For Rupert of Hentzau had taken the swords from their case and put them on the table. With a slight bow Rudolf took one, and the two assumed their positions. Suddenly Rupert lowered his point. The frown vanished from his face, and he spoke in his usual bantering tone.

"By the way," said he, "perhaps we're letting our feelings run away with us. Have you more of a mind now to be King of Ruritania? If so I'm ready to be the most faithful of your subjects."

"You honour me, Count."

"Provided, of course, that I'm one of the most favoured and the richest. Come, come, the fool is dead now; he lived like a fool and he died like a fool. The place is empty. A dead man has no rights and suffers no wrongs. Damn it, that's good law, isn't it? Take his place and his wife. You can pay my price then. Or are you still virtuous? Faith, how little some men learn from the world they live in! If I had your chance——"

"Come, Count, you'd be the last man to trust Rupert of Hentzau."

"If I made it worth his while?"

"But he's a man who would take the pay and betray his associate."

Again Rupert flushed. When he next spoke his voice was hard, cold, and low.

"By God! Rudolf Rassendyll," said he, "I'll kill you here and now."

"I ask no better than that you should try."

"And then I'll proclaim that woman for what she is through all Strelsau."

A smile came on his lips as he watched Rudolf's face.

"Guard yourself, my lord," said Mr. Rassendyll.

"Aye, for no better than—— There, man, I'm ready for you." For Rudolf's blade had touched his in warning.

The steel jangled. The girl's pale face was at the crevice of the hinge. She heard the blades cross again and again. Then one would run up the other with a sharp grating slither. At times she caught a glimpse of a figure in quick forward lunge or rapid wary withdrawal. Her brain was almost paralysed. Ignorant of the mind and heart of young Rupert, she could not conceive that he tried to kill the King. Yet the words she had caught sounded like the words of men quarrelling, and she could not persuade herself that the gentlemen fenced only for pastime. They were not speaking now; but she heard their hard breathing and the movement of their unresting feet on the bare boards of the floor. Then a cry rang out, clear and merry with the fierce hope of triumph:

"Nearly! nearly!"

She knew the voice for Rupert of Hentzau's, and it was the King who answered calmly:

"Nearly isn't quite."

Again she listened. They seemed to be pausing for a moment, for there was no sound, save of the hard breathing and deep-drawn pants of men who rest an instant in the midst of intense exertion. Then came again the clash and the slitherings; and one of them crossed into her view. She knew the tall figure and she saw the red hair; it was the King. Backward step by step he seemed to be driven, coming nearer and nearer to the door. At last there was no more than a foot between him and her; only the crazy panel prevented her putting out her hand to touch him. Again the voice of Rupert rang out in rich exultation:

"I have you now! Say your prayers, King Rudolf!"

"Say your prayers!" Then they fought. It was earnest, not play. And it was the King—her King—her dear King, who was in great peril of his life! For an instant she knelt, still watching. Then with a low cry of terror she turned and ran headlong down the steep stairs. Her mind could not tell what to do, but her heart cried out that she must do something for her King. Reaching the ground floor, she ran with wide-open eyes into the kitchen. The stew was on the hob; the old woman still held the spoon, but she had ceased to stir and fallen into a chair.

"He's killing the King! He's killing the King!" cried Rosa, seizing her mother by the arm. "Mother, what shall we do? He's killing the King!"

The old woman looked up with dull eyes and a stupid cunning smile.

"Let them alone," she said. "There's no King here."

"Yes, yes. He's upstairs in the Count's room. They're fighting, he and the Count of Hentzau. Mother, Count Rupert will kill him!"

"Let them alone. He the King? He's no king," muttered the old woman again.

For an instant Rosa stood looking down on her in helpless despair. Then a light flashed into her eyes.

"I must call for help!" she cried.

The old woman seemed to spring to sudden life. She jumped up and caught her daughter by the shoulder.

"No, no," she whispered in quick accents. "You—you don't know. Let them alone, you fool! It's not our business. Let them alone."

"Let me go, mother, let me go! Mother, I must help the King!"

"I'll not let you go," said Mother Holf.

But Rosa was young and strong; her heart was fired with terror for the King's danger.

"I must go!" she cried; and she flung her mother's grasp off from her, so that the old woman was thrown back into her chair, and the spoon fell from her hand and clattered on the tiles. But Rosa turned and fled down the passage and through the shop. The bolts delayed her trembling fingers for an instant. Then she flung the door wide. A new amazement filled her eyes at the sight of the eager crowd before the house. Then her eyes fell on me where I stood beside the Lieutenant and Rischenheim, and she uttered her wild cry, "Help! The King!"

With one bound I was by her and in the house, while Bernenstein cried, "Quicker!" from behind.

The things that men call presages, presentiments, and so forth, are to my mind for the most part idle nothings: sometimes it is only that probable events cast before them a natural shadow which superstitious fancy twists into a heaven-sent warning; oftener the same desire that gives conception works fulfilment, and the dreamer sees in the result of his own act and will a mysterious accomplishment independent of his effort. Yet when I observe thus calmly and with good sense on the matter to the Constable of Zenda, he shakes his head and answers: "But Rudolf Rassendyll knew from the first that he would come again to Strelsau and engage young Rupert point to point. Else why did he practise with the foils so as to be a better swordsman the second time than he was the first? Mayn't God do anything that Fritz von Tarlenheim can't understand? A pretty notion, on my life!" And he goes off grumbling.

Well, be it inspiration or be it delusion—and the difference stands often on a hair's breadth—I am glad that Rudolf had it. For if a man once grows rusty, it is everything short of impossible to put the fine polish on his skill again. Mr. Rassendyll had strength, will, coolness, and, of course, courage. None would have availed had not his eye been in perfect familiarity with its work and his hand obeyed it as readily as the bolt slips in a well-oiled groove. As the thing stood, the lithe agility and unmatched dash of young Rupert but just missed being too much for him. He was in deadly peril when the girl Rosa ran down to bring him aid. His practised skill was able to maintain his defence. He sought to do no more, but endured Rupert's fiery attacks and wily feints in an almost motionless stillness. Almost, I say; for the slight turns of wrist that seem nothing are everything, and served here to keep his skin whole and his life in him.

There was an instant—Rudolf saw it in his eyes and dwelt on it when he lightly painted the scene for us—when there dawned on Rupert of Hentzau the knowledge that he could not break down his enemy's guard. Surprise, chagrin, amusement, or something like it, seemed blended in his look. He could not make out how he was caught and checked in every effort, meeting, it seemed, a barrier of iron impregnable in rest. His quick brain grasped the lesson in an instant. If his skill were not the greater, the victory would not be his, for his endurance was the less. He was younger and his frame not so closely knit; pleasure had taken its tithe from him; perhaps a good cause goes for something. Even while he almost pressed Rudolf against the panel of the door, he seemed to know that his measure of success was full. But what the hand could not compass the head might contrive. In quickly conceived strategy he began to give pause in his attack, nay, he retreated a step or two. No scruples hampered his devices, no code of honour limited the means he would employ. Backing before his opponent, he seemed to Rudolf to be faint-hearted; he was baffled, but seemed despairing; he was weary, but played a more complete fatigue. Rudolf advanced, pressing and attacking, only to meet a defence as perfect as his own. They were in the middle of the room now, close by the table. Rupert, as though he had eyes in the back of his head, skirted round, avoiding it by a narrow inch. His breathing was quick and distressed, gasp tumbling over gasp, but still his eye was alert and his hand unerring. He had but a few moments' more effort left in him: it was enough if he could reach his goal and perpetrate the trick on which his mind, fertile in every base device, was set. For it was towards the mantelpiece that his

retreat, seeming forced, in truth so deliberate, led him. There was the letter, there lay the revolvers. The time to think of risks was gone by; the time to boggle over what honour allowed or forbade had never come to Rupert of Hentzau. If he could not win by force and skill he would win by guile, and by treachery to the test that he had himself invited. The revolvers lay on the mantelpiece: he meant to possess himself of one, if he could gain an instant in which to snatch it.

The device that he adopted was nicely chosen. It was too late to call a rest or ask breathing space: Mr. Rassendyll was not blind to the advantage he had won, and chivalry would have turned to folly had it allowed such indulgence. Rupert was hard by the mantelpiece now. The sweat was pouring from his face, and his breast seemed like to burst in the effort after breath; yet he had enough strength for his purpose. He must have slackened his hold on his weapon, for when Rudolf's blade next struck it, it flew from his hand, twirled out of a nerveless grasp, and slid along the floor. Rupert stood disarmed, and Rudolf motionless.

"Pick it up," said Mr. Rassendyll, never thinking there had been a trick.

"Aye, and you'll truss me while I do it."

"You young fool, don't you know me yet?" and Rudolf lowered his blade, resting its point on the floor, while with his left hand he indicated Rupert's weapon. Yet something warned him: it may be there came a look in Rupert's eyes, perhaps of scorn for his enemy's simplicity, perhaps of pure triumph in the graceless knavery. Rudolf stood waiting.

"You swear you won't touch me while I pick it up?" asked Rupert, shrinking back a little, and thereby getting an inch or two nearer the mantelpiece.

"You have my promise; pick it up. I won't wait any longer."

"You won't kill me unarmed?" cried Rupert, in alarmed scandalized expostulation.

"No; but——"

The speech went unfinished, unless a sudden cry were its ending. And as he cried, Rudolf Rassendyll, dropping his sword on the ground, sprang forward. For Rupert's hand had shot out behind him and was on the butt of one of the revolvers. The whole trick flashed on Rudolf, and he sprang, flinging his long arms round Rupert. But Rupert had the revolver in his hand.

In all likelihood the two neither heard nor heeded, though it seemed to me that the creaks and groans of the old stairs were loud enough to

wake the dead. For now Rosa had given the alarm: Bernenstein and I—or I and Bernenstein (for I was first, and therefore may put myself first) had rushed up. Hard behind us came Rischenheim, and hot on his heels a score of fellows, pushing and shouldering and trampling. We in front had a fair start, and gained the stairs unimpeded; Rischenheim was caught up in the ruck and gulfed in the stormy tossing group that struggled for first footing on the steps. Yet soon they were after us, and we heard them reach the first landing as we sped up to the last. There was a confused din through all the house, and it seemed now to echo muffled and vague through the walls from the street without. I was conscious of it, although I paid no heed to anything but reaching the room where the King—where Rudolf—was. Now I was there, Bernenstein hanging to my heels. The door did not hold us a second. I was in, he after me. He slammed the door and set his back against it, just as the rush of feet flooded the highest flight of stairs. And at the moment a revolver shot rang clear and loud.

The Lieutenant and I stood still, he against the door, I a pace farther into the room. The sight we saw was enough to arrest us with its strange interest. The smoke of the shot was curling about, but neither man seemed wounded. The revolver was in Rupert's hand, and its muzzle smoked. But Rupert was jammed against the wall, just by the side of the mantelpiece. With one hand Rudolf had pinned his left arm to the wainscoting higher than his head, with the other he held his right wrist. I drew slowly nearer; if Rudolf was unarmed I could fairly enforce a truce and put them on equality; yet, though Rudolf was unarmed, I did nothing. The sight of his face stopped me. He was very pale and his lips were set, but it was his eyes that caught my gaze, for they were glad and merciless. I had never seen him look thus before. I turned from him to young Hentzau's face. Rupert's teeth were biting his under lip, the sweat dropped and the veins swelled large and blue on his forehead; his eyes were set on Rudolf Rassendyll. Fascinated, I drew nearer. Then I saw what passed. Inch by inch Rupert's arm curved, the elbow bent, the hand that had pointed almost straight from him and at Mr. Rassendyll pointed now away from both towards the window. But its motion did not stop; it followed the line of a circle; now it was on Rupert's arm; still it moved, and quicker now, for the power of resistance grew less. Rupert was beaten; he felt it and knew it, and I read the knowledge in his eyes. I stepped up to Rudolf Rassendyll. He heard or felt me, and turned his eyes for an instant. I do not know what my face said, but he shook his head and turned back to

Rupert. The revolver, held still in the man's own hand, was at his heart. The motion ceased, the point was reached.

I looked again at Rupert. Now his face was easier; there was a slight smile on his lips; he flung back his comely head and rested thus against the wainscoting; his eyes asked a question of Rudolf Rassendyll. I turned my gaze to where the answer was to come, for Rudolf made none in words. By the swiftest of movements he shifted his grasp from Rupert's wrist and pounced on his hand. Now his forefinger rested on Rupert's, and Rupert's was on the trigger. I am no soft-heart, but I laid a hand on his shoulder. He took no heed; I dared do no more. Rupert glanced at me. I caught his look, but what could I say to him? Again my eyes were riveted on Rudolf's finger. Now it was crooked round Rupert's, seeming like a man who strangles another.

I will not say more. He smiled to the last; his proud head, which had never bent for shame, did not bend for fear. There was a sudden tightening in the pressure of that crooked forefinger, a flash, a noise. He was held up against the wall for an instant by Rudolf's hand; when that was removed he sank, a heap that looked all head and knees.

But hot on the sound of the discharge came a shout and an oath from Bernenstein. He was hurled away from the door, and through it burst Rischenheim, and the whole score after him. They were jostling one another and crying out to know what had passed and where the King was. High over all the voices, coming from the back of the throng, I heard the cry of the girl Rosa. But as soon as they were in the room, the same spell that had fastened Bernenstein and me to inactivity imposed its numbing power on them also. Only Rischenheim gave a sudden sob and ran forward to where his cousin lay. The rest stood staring. For a moment Rudolf faced them. Then, without a word, he turned his back. He put out the right hand with which he had just killed Rupert of Hentzau, and took the letter from the mantelpiece. He glanced at the envelope, then he opened the letter. The handwriting banished any last doubt he had; he tore the letter across, and again in four pieces, and yet again to smaller fragments. Then he sprinkled the morsels of paper into the blaze of fire. I believe that every eye in the room followed them and watched till they curled and crinkled into black wafery ashes. Thus at last the Queen's letter was safe.

4

THE DUEL

(FROM "AN AFFAIR OF DISHONOUR" BY WILLIAM DE MORGAN)

This description of a duel to the death tells its own story and needs no further comment.

FIVE o'clock by the sundial on the lawn, and the man that had to fight the duel at seven was sound asleep and dreaming. He was dreaming about a place that must have been in existence, of course, when he was a boy, or how could it be there now? And there it was, sure enough, with the great marble fountain in the centre, and the yew-hedges clipped into the form of dancers all round. And there in the fountain-basin were the huge fish that must have been there then, human heads and all. And the six globes of solid gold on each angle of the hexagon parapet that skirted it and held the water in. None of these things had ever been brought to the Hall in his time—he was sure of it.

That of a sudden it dawned upon him that this strange place was only Pan's Garden, familiar to his boyhood. But there was no such fountain in those days. That was all new. Nothing was there then but a shallow stone basin where the paths crossed, with a foursquare parapet just above the ground, a mere lip-rim of acanthus-leaf, with a bare relic of the God in the centre, washed for ever by the water-trickle that still kept a memory of the purpose of its youth. But how came he never to have noticed this new fountain? That was the oddity of it. He did not trouble about the human heads on the fish.

It was not as if the Box Walk, so called, that led to it was one that he had shunned in those days. On the contrary, the fact that he and his brothers were forbidden to play there, in order that the box-hedges it took its name from should flourish unspoiled, had always served as a stimulus to close investigation whenever guardian eyes could be evaded. He could recognize every lane and alley, every slightest feature, of the rose-garden it bisected as he walked along it,

but now and then to find in the very middle of it, where he could remember nothing but the mossgrown masonry, with its trace of Pan, a change like this.

If he were to see any of his people about, how could he ask them to explain it? How was he to confess his ignorance—he, the owner of Croxley Hall for twenty years, whose forebears had owned it for nigh two hundred? How could he say to old Nicholas, if he were to see him now: “Speak up, you old dotard, and tell me who placed this fountain here—I or my father?”

If he were to see anyone about who did not know him, then he might ask. There was a veiled lady walking towards him from a very great distance off—walking with a limp slowly, slowly—as soon as she should reach him he could ask her. He knew no lady at Croxley who walked with a limp. His mother limped, certainly; but then she died when he was just of age, eighteen years ago. The lady with the limp came on very slowly.

Quite suddenly she reached him, and her voice was his mother’s. It sounded stifled, behind the veil, but it was his mother’s.

“Dumb son—dumb son! Try to speak—try to speak! Oliver—Oliver!”

And then Sir Oliver tried to find his voice, but his teeth jammed close, and no word would come. A frightful nightmare horror was upon him, and he felt powerless. But he raised one hand with a great effort, and caught at the veil before him. He pulled it aside, and saw no face; but a sort of woodwork of intersecting splints; that could cause, as it fell suddenly to pieces, a jerking laugh.

And then the man that had to fight the duel at seven was awake, cold sweat upon his brow; but from his dream, not from the knowledge in his mind of what manner of day was to come. And then a belated clock struck five: it was close enough, though, on the heels of the sundial.

He left blind and shutter untouched as he slipped secretly away to find the clothes he left overnight in another room. If the woman awoke it would spoil all.

He stole down the broad staircase, shrinking from the ground beneath at every creak; glancing round and backward, round and backward, none the easier in his mind that risk grew less at every step; too full of manly confidence in victory, of faith in the powers of his own sword-arm, to cherish stealthy longings for detection. Small fear of a mishap with that opponent, even if his own cause had not been

so bad as to make the Devil's friendship sure: there was that Providence at least that he could trust in.

Across the dry firm foothold of the dewless turf, and through into the covert. The mid-June sun had given its earliest message to the daisies long since, but no cloud had come between them yet. The thrushes on the lawn were disappointed at the weather, as they knew the worms would stay below. Was it true, Sir Oliver found it in him to wonder, that the thrush can hear the sound of the worm underground, and knows from it where to watch for an unsuspicious head? The sound of the mole, too, he knows, and can imitate; and uses his skill to quicken the worm's pace. So Sir Oliver's mother had told him long ago. Ugh!—that intolerable dream! The very recollection of it made the cold sweat start from his brow.

Three horses and two men were silent in the shadow of the copper-beeches—three horses who knew nothing of the work on hand; two men who knew, and were to know more soon. One, Sir Oliver's second, a tried old friend, a good fellow, one who flinched from no debauchery and profligacy that might add a lustre of achievement to the career of a man of fashion of the days of the Restoration; a man of wit and wits—who needed them, indeed, for lack of much else to live upon. The other a tried old groom, a bad fellow like his father before him, but like him, too, with one redeeming virtue—an equivalent one, perhaps—of unchangeable devotion to the Raydons of Croxley Thorpe.

A seven-mile ride to the tryst, half-way to her father's house—for it is her father he is to cross swords with; not husband, lover, brother, merely her father, half as old again as his opponent. That is what makes Sir Oliver so confident, makes his foot spring so lightly to the stirrup, makes him exult in his saddle on the turf. For they chose the grass-land, to be noiseless, and pass by the Mausoleum in the Park.

Croxley Park is no poor enclosure in a three-mile ring-fence. You may ride through a clear two miles of scattered oak and beechen covert before you find the Mausoleum in its central solitude. When you do, you may wonder at its horrible ugliness of form, but you will forgive it for its colour and its lichens. Its architect was surely guilty of a crime against the stone his handiwork kept out of a place in some beautiful building. But it is patient, and will wait for admiration, which will come in the course of the ages that are needed to brew an Antiquity.

“Good for the Day of Judgment, Raydon!”

"Better than the Judgment itself, for some of them." And then they both laughed, and said never a word more.

But it cheered them up, and made them feel manly, to show that they dared to blaspheme a little. Because, remember!—light speech about the Day of Judgment, that seems a small matter to us, supplied good impiety for men of that time, who had had a Creed flogged into them at a public school.

Sir Oliver credited damnation to some of his ancestors; for though they were permitted to sleep under that stone until their resurrection, were there not among them taints of forbidden heresies—errors of doctrine, that would be much more likely to procure it for them than plain sins, murder or cruelty, tyranny to the weak or treachery to the unsuspecting—far, far more than gentlemanly vices that even their victims would forget sometime? But he rode faster than before to pass the Mausoleum, for his mother was there—she herself, asleep in a leaden coffin—and Sir Oliver had misgivings what she would think, if she were to awake, about the errand that carried him so near her.

That brought him back his nightmare dream again, with the gibberish the dream-thing that neither was nor was not his mother had used, and left him as a legacy. The words seized on the rhythm of his horse's hoofs on the turf and beat monotonously with them. He could not escape them now. He could only quicken his pace to get it over. And then Colonel Mainwaring would have it they must not ride hard: a little exercise was well enough, but the duellist should come fresh to his work. This was not to be a bloodless duel—an encounter to be averted by a word of contrition, or arrested by a formal satisfaction to offended Honour. It was a fixture for a Murder—there in the summer woodlands, and all the blue of Heaven athrill with the music of the lark. A fixture for a Murder, with a doubt of which of two men should play the corpse.

The more reason, so, for scanty speech; the fewer words the better! The ground was chosen yesterday by the seconds: in yonder copse, fifty yards away, a farmer's cart is ready by their appointment to bear away what cannot walk or sit a horse—what may never do either again. Delay is only risk of interruption, and the two swords are of a length. Strip the men to their shirts, and to it at once!

A village boy, a youngster of eleven, had been shrewd enough to see that this cart, starting in the early morning furtively, must portend something to be seen, something of interest and excitement. Else

why should a gentleman he knew to be no farmer accompany it—the village surgeon who had bound up a cut hand for him and stopped the blood? He had followed on, boy-like, always wondering the more as the cart went farther; had hidden awhile that two horsemen should pass him by; had seen them overtake the cart, and now slipped up to the scene of action undetected. But he is young, and cannot bear intent to kill. The swift glitter of the crossed swords is a terror to him, and he stops his ears that he may not hear their slicing ring and sharp metallic click. For all that, he is held spell-bound; and must see it through, now.

He is young, but he can see and understand—enough, at any rate, to see that the older man is keen to kill, if he may. Keener than the younger and shorter man, who seems to this boy to hold his opponent in play, keeping well behind his own strong guard. A glorious art, thinks the boy through his terror, that can make of a mere quick-moving point an impassable steel wall. And he watches, still spell-bound, and is aware that the older man, warmer and warmer to his work, is taxing the swordsmanship of his opponent, albeit he himself is the lesser swordsman.

The ringing of the swords quickens, strengthens. A strong rally and a swift! . . . What is that?

The sword-point of the older man, struck upward from a well-delivered thrust, has reached his opponent's forehead, glancing off. Both seconds have interposed. Blood is streaming across his eye from the cut, and he wipes it impatiently away.

"It is nothing—a bare scratch!" he says. But the sight of the blood has broken the spell the boy was under, and he goes sick, and runs, hesitating now and again, and half-turning back. Then presently the swords begin anew, and he is half-sorry for himself, not to be there to see . . . Yes, he will have a man's courage, and go back, come of it what may!

The seconds had looked at one another as the two principals held back with dropped points, Sir Oliver still brushing away the blood-drops as they came.

"I tell you, it is a scratch," he repeated. "Give me a handkerchief." He wound one, handed to him by his second, round his head. It served to stop the blood from reaching his eye, and left his sight clear. Then the other second said to Colonel Mainwaring: "Do we proceed?" "How is that?" And then, as they spoke together aside: "We have the technical right to stop this, I believe."

"It is at least a moot point," said Colonel Mainwaring.

"Listen to me, Mainwaring," said the other. "If the quarrel were some slight word spoken at cards or dice—or about some gay wench upon the town—I should say that Honour was satisfied, but . . ."

"But in the matter of a man's daughter, you would say, of course it is different. That is so. But there is no wish to withdraw, on my side. Nevertheless, if Mr. Mauleverer is satisfied, I have no doubt Sir Oliver will be content."

"Can we not stop it of our own right? It is a bad business." The speaker left the impression that his own co-operation was against his will.

"Your man is the challenger," said Mainwaring. "If he is satisfied . . ." He paused, and walked over to his principal, who was awaiting with his sword-point dropped, the result of the colloquy. So was his opponent, whom his second approached, and spoke with in an undertone.

"This quarrel is none of my provocation, Mainwaring, and you know it. This man's daughter is her own mistress—a free agent. She has suffered no wrong at my hands. If Mr. Mauleverer is satisfied, need I say I am?" Did Sir Oliver mean the other to overhear his words—to attach an exasperating meaning to them? If not, why that raised voice and mocking manner?

Mauleverer's second had urged him to accept what had passed, as amends for the wrong done him. He had wavered, was wavering, before the earnest pleadings of his friends, when the tone of Sir Oliver reached him, if not his actual words. Then he spoke in a quick undertone to his second, who again approached Colonel Mainwaring.

"Mr. Mauleverer will consent to press this matter no farther now, in consideration of Sir Oliver Raydon's temporary disablement. But Sir Oliver will no doubt be ready to meet Mr. Mauleverer again as soon as it is removed."

Colonel Mainwaring appeared to consider for a moment, seeming to refer to the many rings on his left hand for enlightenment; then looked up and said curtly: "I need not consult Sir Oliver. I can answer for it that he will not avail himself of Mr. Mauleverer's indulgence."

And almost before the signal was given the swords had crossed once more, and the encounter was renewed. But this time on other lines. Whatever slight remorse of conscience had made the younger combatant hang back, possibly with a wish to steer clear of killing the

man he had wronged, whose hospitality he had most villainously abused—for you can guess the story of it—that was a remorse so unstable that it could not overlive the pain of a sword-scratch on the forehead. And all the evil of a wicked heart was in the half-grin and the blood-smearred eye and the set jaw of Sir Oliver as he turned again to his work in earnest.

But not to triumph at once. Not till the fifteen or twenty years there is between him and his opponent begins to tell in his favour. Then, as he becomes aware that the sword that opposes him is fainter in its resolution, that the breath comes shorter and shorter still of the man who wields it, the growing fierceness of his own attack follows him remorselessly as he falls back, and ends the long encounter with a thrust.

He who receives it is wounded to death. The surgeon who is waiting with the cart can do nothing—no surgeon can—to stop the blood that is welling out inside the shirt he cuts with scissors to detach it. All the lint the world can supply would be useless there. But on no account move or raise him yet.

He is trying to speak, and his second kneels beside him, puts his ear down to catch the faint words. "He asks to speak to Sir Oliver Raydon," is the report. His murderer then kneels, and the words he stoops down to hear are: "Oliver Raydon, I leave you to God and your conscience."

Then the father of the woman who is sleeping through it all is dead; and the dead face tells the bystanders that this man was older than they thought him. For the serenity of his strength and confidence, and the flush of strong health, had made him seem no unfit opponent for his slayer. What will the woman say?

What tale can be told to the woman? Which of the three who can tell it will be the teller? The sound of their horses on the turf dies soon, and now nothing is left but to carry the dead man home.

Then the surgeon says to the second, under his breath: "He was wounded twice. I can answer it."

"Can you say what time apart the wounds were?" is the reply.

"Not over close together. The first would have bled slow, but there was much blood from it. He fought after he was wounded."

"Make me sure of that." Both examine the body again; and presently, all being ready, the cart departs with its burden, and the two horses follow some little way behind, one ridden, one riderless. Then the song of the lark and the cuckoo's note come back into the

stillness, and there is no other sound? . . . Yes!—there in the bushes the voice of a boy crying bitterly for the horror of what he has seen, not daring to go home for knowledge of the thing that he must tell, or live concealing.

IN THE FOREIGN LEGION

(FROM P. C. WREN'S "SOLDIERS OF MISFORTUNE")

Sir Otho Robert Mandeville-Bellême is the son of a renegade, who married his cook. The boy, on the death of his drunken father, is taken to live with his mother's sister, and eventually, after many humiliating episodes, takes up professional boxing, becoming Champion of England. He joins the Foreign Legion when he hears of the marriage of the girl he loves to a school contemporary—and while at Mellerat, this stupendous and thrilling fight between Otho and a Senegalese takes place.

I

FOLLOWED by his seconds, Joe Mummery, William Bossom and Sailor Harris, Otho made his way from the dressing-tent through a lane of spectators, and climbed into the ring, amidst a deafening roar of applause. Some might yearn for the victory of the black man and others for that of the white, but all rejoiced in the fact that a fight there was to be.

Otho eyed his opponent while his seconds pulled tight new gloves on to his hands.

At close quarters, the negro looked positively colossal. What a chest! What arms! What a column of a neck! And what magnificent legs supported the huge body, on which was evidently not an ounce of superfluous flesh—all solid muscle. And how small the head in comparison with the enormous torso—small and probably almost solid bone. What hope for a knock-out blow when the circumference of the neck is almost equal to that of the head, and the latter scarcely contains a brain to be rendered unconscious? A man could destroy his hands in battering a head like that, and without doing it appreciable harm.

And what of the muscles protecting the "mark"? Magnificent! Those stomach muscles reminded one of the statues of Hercules. Little hope that one could effectively distress the owner of such an armoured front by means of blows on the "mark." And what of the face? . . . Sub-human. . . . Savage. . . . Terrible.

At the moment, cold, cruel, deadly, suggestive of a tiger about to be fed, licking its chops in quiet anticipation. . . . And a minute hence? Ferocious, murderous, terrible, suggestive of a tiger leaping with flashing blood-maddened eyes upon its prey.

"Bob, boy, I can't do it. I can't do it," muttered Joe desperately.

"Can't do what, Joe?" smiled Otho.

"Stand by and see you fight this black elephant. Worse'n Jack Johnson. Talk about David and Goliath!"

"Yes, let's talk about them, Joe. David put him down for the count, didn't he?"

"Bob, I can't do it. I can't do it," reiterated Joe. "If he fouls you I shall jump into this ring and . . ."

"I'd never forgive you," said Otho sternly.

"But for me, blasted old fool that I am, you wouldn't be sitting here, boy . . ."

"Much obliged to you for that, Joe," interrupted Otho.

". . . But I couldn't sit quiet with that fat buck nigger standing there unchallenged in front of a thousand white men and all these niggers and Arabs," continued Joe. "And I'd never fought a nigger. . . . And I thought if I couldn't beat him, I might give him a push or two. And anyhow, he wouldn't have had an unchallenged walk-over. . . . And up I jump before I knew what I was doing—and then I seemed to see Mary's face and I remembered my last words to her. . . ."

"Jolly glad you did, Joe," said Otho.

"And what have I done? Brought this on you. . . . If I'd kept my silly head shut, this wouldn't have happened. . . . *Me*, brought Mary's son to this! To be broken up by an indestructible nigger champion!"

Sailor Harris kicked the speaker and caught his eye.

"Talk sense, Joe," he growled. "Landed him 'ere to smash the blasted black-faced nigger, more like. Why, Bob'll out 'im in three rahnds! Remember what 'e done to you, Joe, an' don't talk silly!"

Joe swallowed hard.

"Damme for a fool," he growled. "Of course Bob'll out him. I'd clean forgotten the boy can smack-it-about a bit. . . ."

A sharp word of command ordered the seconds out of the ring.

"God help you, Boy," said Joe as he dropped to the ground, and stood beside Sailor Harris, his mouth a thin hard gash in his granite face.

Otho strode to the middle of the ring, his arms extended to their full length before him. The moment that the tips of his gloves touched those of the Senegalese, he leapt back, and, on the defensive, awaited what might befall. His highest hope was to put up, for the honour of the Legion, something that could be called a fight, and, to do this, his strategy and tactics must be designed for the postponement of his destruction. Since it was hopeless to fight for victory, he would fight to avoid quick defeat. In short, fight on the defensive. A very sound thing for a boxer to realize his limitations and act accordingly.

This man was some two stone heavier than he, was inches taller, inches longer in the reach, probably twice as strong and half as susceptible to shock. And, in addition to being the perfect fighting animal by nature, he must be the perfect boxer by training, since he had out-boxed that marvellous craftsman, the champion of Europe:

Yes, box for safety and the avoidance of the humiliation of instantaneous and ridiculous defeat. So, let the good M'Bongo declare himself. . . .

Ah! here he came, vast, menacing, confident, appalling.

Those eyes! Eyes of agate. What colour were they? Grey yellowish-brown, the irises the colour of gravel seen in sunshine beneath running peat water, set in gleaming, yellowish blood-shot whites. Terrible eyes, the eyes of the tiger. They must be watched unceasingly. No, not the eyes of a tiger. Where had he seen such eyes before? Soulless, shallow, sad, as well as terrible. Yes, in the head of a great ape, as it glared at him from behind strong iron bars. So terribly human, so terribly animal, tragic, haunted . . .

Suddenly, Otho's head dropped to the right, suddenly flashed back to the left. Two tremendous blows had missed him, and the negro had grunted with his own violence.

Otho smiled with a cool superiority, in no way indicative of his true feelings.

The negro rushed, driving a tremendous right as he did so, and Otho lightly side-stepped and for the fraction of a second put his hands down, and a tremendous cheer rose from the ranks of the Legion.

Sacred name of a little pink dog, he was making the anointed nigger look silly! *Vive la Legion!*

"Oh, careful, Boy. For God's sake, careful," whispered Joe Mummery.

And Otho was careful, and under no delusions. All to the good, if he could anger the man so that he lost his coolness and poise: and

all to the good if he could make him tire himself for nothing. But probably, nothing could tire him. It might be possible to puzzle him, though.

Another lightning rush and terrific spring as of the tiger upon its prey. Another easy evasion and yelp of laughter from the Legion.

This was rather a good start. This marched. But again, no illusions. The Senegalese was, of course, being a bit obvious. What he wanted was a lightning victory, a knock-out in the first ten seconds.

Wait till he settled down really to box. The black giant was edging up to him, his arms flexed at an obtuse angle, elbows and fists at the same level, parallel with the ground, and at the height of his breast.

They were perfectly still. Which would shoot out first? And would it be in earnest, or in feint? No part of that huge ebony statue seemed to move, save that the whole thing grew imperceptibly but steadily nearer.

Otho watched the shallow dreadful eyes, and tried to read the thought that lay behind them. They were dull, empty, lifeless—as of the goaded and sated tiger about to sleep. But the tiger was neither goaded nor sated, and about to do anything but sleep; and Otho, utterly motionless, watched the eyes, while in tense silence, the great statue of black marble moved, as though without moving, upon the smaller one of white.

And suddenly, into those dull, empty, lifeless eyes flashed a gleam, and Otho leapt backward even as the negro struck—and struck nothing.

"Fight, you white rat," he growled, as he squared up to Otho, who had not yet struck a blow. "Show some sport, you village dog. . . . Dis not de runnin' match. . . . I guess you win all dem. Can't run all night here, you know. . . . Stan' still an' I finish you quick. Better get it over, white maggot. . . . Becos when I . . ." and on the word "I," a lightning left shot out and was followed instantaneously with a terrific right hook.

A near thing! Almost had the trick succeeded, and kept Otho waiting for the end of the sentence.

Almost had the Senegalese hypnotized him into feeling that no blow could possibly be delivered until the sentence had been completed. By no means so unintelligent an animal as he appeared! Did the audience but know it, there should have been a laugh for the

Senegalese, for undeniably he had, by a kind of primitive hetero-suggestion, made Otho expect attack at the end of the remark, but by no means during its utterance.

A very near thing indeed.

Had one of those blows come home, it would have come to roost; and had the fellow talked a little longer, he would probably have brought off his coup.

"Now I show you somethin'. . . . Now I set about you. . . . I knock your jaw crooked. . . . An' if you don' die, your teeth never meet together no more. See, M'sieu White-liver? An' as you go down, I give you bang on de nose that mak' all de lil' bones stick through de skin. Nose all flat like cat. Gone, done, finish. See? Den if dey cleans you up an' puts you on your feet, I just give . . ."

Thud!

Otho's fist had shot out like a stone from a catapult, and with perfect timing and tremendous force had struck the Senegalese on the throat. A terrifically heavy blow, with fourteen stone of bone and muscle and sinew behind it—and M'Bongu was shaken.

With a wild whooping cry in his own vernacular, he clapped his left hand to his throat and drove his right at Otho's face. Otho parried with his left, and as M'Bongu's hand fell from his throat, Otho struck again, successfully, at the same place.

A loud boom from the gong closed the round, and Otho strolled to his chair unbreathed and untouched.

Splendid! He had lasted one round anyhow, and that round was his, thanks to the fact that hitting in the middle of a sentence is a game at which two can play.

"I'm going to demand to have your hands bandaged, Bob," said Joe Mummery as he violently fanned Otho with a towel. "'Tain't fair. You could bust both your hands on that nigger's head, and be out of the fight before he'd hit you. . . . Dislocate the bones."

"No need, Joe. I'm only going to hit him on the head once . . . And that'll be the last wallop of the fight. . . . On the point of his jaw."

"That's the spirit, son," grinned Joe approvingly. "But for God's sake be careful. . . . Fight cautious and don't mix it. . . . That negro'll never be knocked out in a lifetime, Bob."

"In his death-time then, p'raps," growled Sailor Harris, massaging Otho's legs.

2

With the stroke of the gong, M'Bongu leapt, almost with one bound, to the middle of the ring, and sprang upon Otho like a tiger. With feet wide apart, planted like a rock, Otho stood firm and, swiftly ducking to his right, received the body of the charging negro upon the point of his left shoulder, a manœuvre that caused M'Bongu to give a coughing grunt as his solar-plexus made the violent contact. As he sprang back, Otho, rising, drove a terrific blow beneath the negro's breast-bone, glanced and fainted at the point of the jaw, and with a powerful right, struck again beneath the breast-bone.

The three almost simultaneous blows delivered on the same spot, the "mark," shook M'Bongu badly, and he drew back, hurt and bewildered, hotly followed by Otho, all on the aggressive. Fainting with left and right, Otho glanced at M'Bongu's mark, and as the latter's right dropped in defence, Otho struck the negro with all his strength upon the throat.

Splendid!

And what was this?

Had he been ill for long?

No; nonsense! There had been a battle and he had been shot. . . . Where? . . . In the head? . . . No . . . legs. . . . They wouldn't move. . . . What was the doctor saying?

"Quatre! . . . Cinq! . . . Six! . . ."

Consciousness and full understanding returned suddenly.

" . . . Sept! . . . Huit! . . ."

With a tremendous effort of will, Otho rolled over, pressed with all his strength upon the canvas-covered boards, drew up one knee beneath him, drew up the other and, swaying on all-fours, shook his head, and looked up.

M'Bongu was leaning against the post in a neutral corner, one hand holding his throat, the other pressed to the pit of his stomach.

" . . . Neuf! . . ."

Otho dragged one foot forward and planted it firmly. He must take his hands from the ground ere "Dix" was called, or he would be "out" . . .

Directly he took his hands from the ground, M'Bongu was free to hit him.

With a heave he got his other foot planted, lurched to his feet, and stood swaying.

M'Bongu ignored him completely.

In a tense and breathless silence, Otho tottered across the ring, balanced his body in front of M'Bongu, measured his distance, swung back his right—and dropped it to his side as the gong struck.

In grim silence, Joe and Sailor Harris worked over the relaxed body of their principal as he lay in his chair with outstretched legs, his arms resting along the ropes.

They dashed cold water upon him from head to foot, and fanned and massaged him violently, as though to get more than sixty seconds' worth from the too-brief minute.

"What happened, Joe?" said the revived Otho.

"He hit you, Son."

"I guessed it!" replied Otho.

"But you 'it 'im first, mate," said Sailor Harris, "or you wouldn't be talkin' now. . . ."

"Blimey, if it ain't anybody's fight yet," he added with a grin. "You keep on pasting 'im in the slats like that, and you'll 'ave 'im—if 'e don't knock you out first . . . But you'll 'ave to keep out of 'arm's way."

"M'Bongu's aims?" said Otho's imp.

"How are you feeling now, Boy?" asked Joe, squeezing a large sponge over Otho's head and wiping his face as a mother does that of her child.

"Oh, lovely," smiled Otho.

And the smile was still on his face as he stepped lightly forth to meet M'Bongu for the third round.

3

But there was no smile in Otho's heart. That had been a very near thing. He had taken the count for nine, and had M'Bongu been in a condition to give him one smack when he arose, it would have finished him. On the other hand, though, M'Bongu had not been in a condition to do anything at all, and, but for the gong, it would have been Otho who would have done the hitting.

But he must not build too much on this, for M'Bongu had not been down at all—merely distressed and bothered. Still, one might take heart from that, and hope to distress and bother him again, even to the point of administering the *coup de grâce* . . . and perhaps this M'Bongu, while a marvel at fighting a winning fight, might not be

so good in a losing one? There might be more lion-like *élan* than bull-dog tenacity in his make-up . . . possibly "more teeth and claws than guts," as Joe would say.

Yes, there was a hope that though an English gentleman's strength and insensibility might be inferior to those of a negro, his spirit might be superior. . . . Mind triumphant over matter. . . . Anyhow, he would need the last ounce of his strength, science, experience and brain as well.

Yes, brain. Strategy and tactics . . . Surely brain, strategy and tactics combined with unquenchable spirit could equalize the physical disparity between Otho Bellême and this giant from the jungle.

M'Bongu was going more warily this round. With the back of his right glove against his throat, and the front of his left against his mark, he slowly circled round Otho, his small head held back, his half-closed eyes seeming to peer over the tops of his high cheek-bones.

Otho gratefully allowed him to circle undisturbed, for he still felt the effects of the blow that had almost knocked him out. His head sang, his arms were heavy, and his knees felt weak and inclined to bend unduly. Every second's respite was precious; so he warily watched and waited, making no movement save a slow pivoting as M'Bongu wove his circles about him.

Suddenly M'Bongu's great left arm shot out. Otho ducked, swung a vicious left hook at M'Bongu's mark and, as M'Bongu's right dropped to guard, Otho swung his own right, from his hip to M'Bongu's throat.

M'Bongu, with an extraordinary sound between a hiccough and a shout, threw science to the winds, sprang at Otho as though to seize his head in his hands to tear it from his body, received a terrific straight left on the throat and stumbled as Otho side-stepped. Instantly, Otho swung a smashing right on the point of M'Bongu's jaw, and, as Otho leapt back, M'Bongu, with dropped hands, swayed forward, and, stiff and straight as a falling tree, crashed face downwards to the boards.

One terrific yell from a thousand Legion throats rang out, as Otho retired to a corner, leant against the post and breathed deeply.

Was he going to keep his word to Joe and strike M'Bongu on the head but once? He hoped so, for, as he felt his knuckles, he realized that he could only strike that lump of rock, with all his strength, at the gravest risk of so shattering his hand as to put it completely out of action. If he hit M'Bongu's head again, it would be a final blow for one of them.

After the first wild cheering, silence fell as the referee's count reached *sept*.

Into the dead silence the sonorous voice shouted "*huit . . . neuf . . .*" and, with a childish chuckling giggle, M'Bongu bounded to his feet, apparently none the worse for the blow, and all the better for the nine seconds' rest.

Taken by surprise, Otho leapt at the rising M'Bongu, parried a tremendous blow that seemed to come almost from the ground, and found himself in M'Bongu's arms. Instantly he dropped his hands and rained punishing short-arm blows on M'Bongu's mark. M'Bongu clinched, pinning Otho's arms to his sides.

All right—a rest would be quite acceptable, and Otho reclined affectionately upon the broad bosom of M'Bongu. But while his body rested, his mind worked. The moment would come, and swiftly, when M'Bongu would weary of supporting him, and then things would happen. Nothing had been said by the referee about hitting in clinches, and M'Bongu would not be likely to make a nice gentlemanly break-away when he did obey the referee's sharp order.

Suddenly, M'Bongu, for the first time in two rounds, spoke, but in different strain from that of his former observations.

"We break clean, *hein?*" he said. "No hit in break-away, *hein?*"

"Right," said Otho. "Break away," and prepared for precisely what happened—a vicious upper-cut that would have ended the fight.

Righteous indignation lent extra force to the straight left that Otho drove at M'Bongu's throat, and the right hook with which he found his "mark."

Either Otho had modestly underestimated the strength of his truly terrible blows, or he had overestimated the protective value of M'Bongu's abdominal muscles, for the negro suddenly doubled up, his hands pressed to the pit of his stomach, his black bullet-head presented straight at Otho.

Upper-cutting with all his strength, Otho drove M'Bongu's head up, with a swift left hook knocked him sideways, and drove a beautifully timed right, straight from the shoulder, at the point of the negro's jaw, his whole weight and every ounce of his strength in the perfect blow.

As his fist struck home, Otho realized that this was almost certainly the heaviest blow that he had ever delivered, and it was without

surprise that he saw M'Bongu's great form reel swiftly back, meet the ropes at knees and neck, collapse straight through them, and fall heavily to the ground.

He had knocked M'Bongu out of the ring.

And while the deafening cheers of the Legion rent the air, M'Bongu's seconds returned him whence he came.

On to the edge of the ring they lifted him, and willing hands thrust him beneath the ropes and into the appointed sphere of his activities, where he lay inert, apparently lifeless.

Not again was Otho to be caught napping. Like a statue, in the very act of striking, he stood motionless, as close to the equally motionless M'Bongu as the strictest fairness might permit—ready to deliver that great and final blow that should end the fight in the instant that M'Bongu's feet should be on the boards and his hands raised from them.

Un . . . deux . . . trois . . . quatre . . . cinq . . . six . . . sept . . . huit . . . neuf . . . TIME!

"Time" had saved M'Bongu—for one minute. In sixty seconds he must arise and face Otho or accept defeat.

4

He arose and faced Otho. He did more, for, as the gong rang for the fourth round, he sprang lightly to his feet, and with a high-pitched laugh, ran to meet him.

This must be the real original indestructible Indiarubber Man! A minute ago he had been knocked, senseless, out of the ring, and here he was, laughing and dancing on his toes, as fresh and bright as though he had just left his bed. What can you do with a man who can't be knocked out and can't be worn down?

You can puzzle and bother and possibly frighten him, if you pit your brains and strategy against his brute strength; and, once again, Otho led a sudden and swift straight-left at the negro's throat.

As the tremendous blow went home, Otho saw M'Bongu's eyes change. Was the glare of rage succeeded by a momentary flash of fear? Almost in the same second, Otho fainted with his right at the same spot, and, as the negro's guard went up, landed heavily on his mark. M'Bongu doubled up, flung his left arm across his face, shot his right forward, and knocked Otho down. As he had had a fraction of time in which to "Glide" the blow, causing it partly to glance along his cheek, Otho was not knocked out.

Springing to his feet, he again received M'Bongu's charge on the point of his shoulder, and, as the latter recoiled, Otho delivered a smashing upper-cut, which, in turn, sent M'Bongu to the boards.

Rising slowly to the support of his knees and one hand, M'Bongu poured forth a torrent of appalling oaths and filthy invective, while the referee counted.

"Now I done playing with you! . . . My seconds tell me I let this fight go four rounds . . . just to make show for General. . . . Now I kill you. . . . I give you rabbit-punch and kidney-punch and when you fall down, I kick you in the stomach accidental. . . . Yaas, you Legion white trash, you come up for fifth round and you never come up for no more. . . . You done finish, because I . . ."

M'Bongu leapt lightly to his feet, and Otho, ducking and springing simultaneously, drove a heavy right at M'Bongu's mark and, his foot slipping, fell and brought the negro down on top of him.

As the gong rang, M'Bongu, rising with his broad back to the referee, struck Otho a terrible chopping blow with the bony side of his wrist, on the back of the neck.

"The damned dirty dog!" swore Sailor Harris, massaging Otho's numbed neck. "That bat-eyed blighter what's refereeing ought to be sittin' at a street corner 'oldin' out a tin mug. I'd give 'im a penny myself, I would, fer there's no doubt about 'im being blind."

"Swine nearly broke my neck," growled Otho. "Will it swell and stiffen, Joe?"

"No, Bob," replied Joe Mummery, as he massaged Otho's arms. "That rabbit-punch either puts you clean out, or nothing. . . . He hasn't broke your neck, but, by God, I'd break his, if I had my knee under his chin. . . ."

"Who wasn't going to hit the nigger on the head only once?" he continued. "You'll smash your hands up, Bob, and then where will you be?"

"Yes," agreed Otho. "But each one was to have been a knock-out. . . . I haven't hit him on the head for wanton amusement at all."

"It's no good, Son," replied Joe. "You'd want a fourteen-pound dumb-bell in your hand to knock that nigger out."

"An' then you'd only break the bloomin' dumb-bell," added Sailor Harris.

As the latter moved from in front of him, Otho glanced across

at M'Bongu, and saw what he had been hoping to see after each round.

M'Bongu was obviously complaining of injury to his throat.

5

In the next round, Otho devoted such aggression as M'Bongu's bustling tactics permitted him, to increasing the latter's perturbation concerning his throat. He was obviously anxious about it, "nursed" it, and permitted the problem of its protection to occupy his mind unduly.

Should all go well, and Otho live to fight a few more rounds, the good M'Bongu was going to be endowed with an obsession, an *idée fixe*. He was going to become all throat and his one thought was going to be its protection. And then . . .

In this round, neither Otho nor M'Bongu was knocked down, and no spectacular nor memorable blows were struck. But, to the least experienced, it was obvious that the negro was out-boxed, out-paced and out-manceuvred. For half the time he seemed to have both hands at his throat while his opponent delivered telling blows upon his mark; and when this vulnerable spot was protected, blow after blow found his throat.

The round ended with prolonged cheering from the now hopeful and thoroughly excited men of the Legion, while to his knot of seconds M'Bongu made no secret of the fact that his throat was swelling and threatening to choke and suffocate him.

As his throat was massaged, he swallowed painfully, between almost tearful complaints of the abominable unfairness of his perfidious opponent.

Apparently the advice of his seconds was that he should swiftly put an end both to the annoyance and to his enemy, for, in the next round, he rushed upon Otho as the gong struck, and, at a pace that could not possibly last, rained upon him ceaseless lightning blows with both hands. Otho was driven reeling backwards and, by foot-work of marvellous speed, by dodging and ducking, side-stepping, stopping, guarding, and covering-up, weathered the first and the worst of the cyclonic hurricane attack.

Suddenly, from the crouch, Otho's right shot up, and straight from his hip, as his body pivoted and rose, struck M'Bongu well beneath the chin, almost lifting him, and driving him backward.

Springing after him, Otho, with all his strength, hooked left and

right upon the negro's prognathous jaw. With a gasping cry, M'Bongu collapsed and rolled upon the boards, clutching his throat with both hands.

There was no question of his being "out," for, scrambling to his knees, he crouched, doubled up, bending his body to and fro, moaning, gasping and coughing.

At the count of "*neuf*" he rose, dodged Otho's swift drive, upper-cut with the violence of a kicking horse and knocked Otho flying with such force and suddenness that his head and shoulders struck the boards first.

It was with the snarl of a tiger that M'Bongu heard the gong.

As Otho revived to the shock of cold water, and the pain of Sailor Harris biting his ear, Joe delivered his ultimatum.

"If we have to carry you to this chair again, Bob, we're going to carry you out of the ring altogether."

Otho gave Joe Mummery a look that made him drop his eyes.

"I will, though," he growled.

Otho treated the remark with the contempt that he felt it deserved.

6

In the seventh round the spectators were privileged to behold some perfect boxing, an exposition of the science and art of the Great Game at its highest. For M'Bongu was wary and chary, while Otho, beginning to feel the tremendous strain, was husbanding his strength for opportunity.

M'Bongu had at length developed tactics to counter those of his opponent, and whenever Otho feinted for his throat or mark, M'Bongu instantly lashed out a straight left and swift right, instead of, as hitherto, waiting to see what was behind Otho's feint, and whether it was his throat or his mark that was threatened.

Twice his new tactics succeeded, and twice Otho was sent to the boards. But the blows were of no more force than was sufficient to knock him down, and he was up again ere the referee began to count.

Just before the gong went, Otho, cornered by M'Bongu, glanced to his left, ducked to his right and rising beneath M'Bongu's out-shot left, upper-cut him heavily beneath the chin.

The eighth round was eventful only for the fact that, in a clinch, M'Bongu, almost lifting Otho, so manœuvred that his own body was between Otho and the referee, and then struck him left and right hooks

in the small of the back with astonishing force and painful effects. Otho, angered, and casting prudence to the winds, swung a right-hook upon M'Bongu's ear, which brought the negro's head within reach of a smashing left hook upon the grinning mouth. M'Bongu reeled from the blow, and Otho, with a lightning follow-up, brought over a terrific drive upon the negro's throat, sprang away as M'Bongu endeavoured to clinch, and walked to his seat, at the sound of the gong, amid the deafening cheers of his comrades.

"Well," he said, as Sailor Harris massaged one leg and William Bossom the other, while Joe Mummery kneaded his biceps muscles, "I've lived eight rounds with the Negro Champion! . . . I die happy."

"Better live happy, Boy," smiled Joe. "Don't you go mixing it. You just box pretty, and take care of yourself. You can't knock him out and if you'd only go careful, you might last the twenty rounds and win on points yet."

"Garn away, Joe," said Sailor Harris, looking up. "That black nigger has only bin saved by the gong, twice."

"Ar, that's right," agreed William Bossom.

"You shut your head, and get on with your work," snapped Joe.

As the seconds dropped from the ring, Joe Mummery turned upon William Bossom with apparent ferocity.

"Didn't I always *say* he was World Champion stuff?" he asked. "Wasn't he a marvel right from the time he was a nipper? . . . Didn't he beat me *easy* for Champion of England—and me in me prime? . . . And can't he beat this bloody great black brute, I tell you? . . ."

Without reply, William Bossom patted his old comrade soothingly upon the back.

7

Things went badly in the ninth round; for Otho's rashness, stubbornness, headstrong temper—and indeed his great heart and dauntless courage—led him into error, and the folly of playing M'Bongu's game. Blinded by the red mist of anger, he wandered from the path of wisdom and descended to M'Bongu's lower level of strategy.

The round began quietly, M'Bongu feigning weariness, while Otho menacingly watched his throat and nursed his own painful hands. Suddenly M'Bongu led a lightning left which banged Otho full upon the nose, jerking his head back and filling his eyes with tears, and instantaneously followed it with a right which split Otho's lip. Had

he not been extraordinarily clever at "riding" blows which he could not parry, he would have been knocked out.

As it was, he was infuriated to madness.

A blow on the nose was what he loathed more than anything, not only by reason of the fact that it was extraordinarily painful and apt to cause much loss of blood, but because, to his curiously fastidious mind, it was humiliating, undignified and disgusting.

To the fire of his wrath M'Bongu added fuel.

"Why don't you fight, you white dog?" he said. "You no fighter, no boxer—you acrobat. . . . You more like dancing *darweish* medicine-man. . . . Now you stand up to me and fight, you juggler."

And the foolish Otho, maddened by the pain of his punched nose, "stood up and fought."

Toe to toe, unflinching, without side-step, duck or dodge, he gave and took. With but little guarding and no feint or finesse, he stood upright and frankly "slugged" with M'Bongu as though he had never boxed in his life—save that every blow had every ounce of weight and strength behind it and came straight and true as bullet from barrel.

In a vast silence there was no sound but thud upon thud upon thud as fist smote flesh with terrible force. For seconds that seemed like minutes, M'Bongu struck Otho and Otho struck M'Bongu, left, right; right, left,—almost with the regularity of two blacksmiths alternately striking an anvil. Nor was Otho now aiming his blows at M'Bongu's throat. With white set face, clenched teeth and burning eyes, he gave and took, he took and gave, while Joe Mummery's heart seemed to die within him, and the great General himself murmured:

"C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre!"

And in those terrible seconds, Otho's eyes began to close, his mouth became shapeless, one of his ears dripped blood, and angry red patches appeared upon his white body.

But, for every blow he had received, a blow he had given, and each one terrible in its power and weight and the scientific skill of its delivery.

And suddenly Otho sprang back—not in evasion, but that he might literally fling his body in one last mighty revolt and rebellion against the immovable impenetrable Thing that was killing him, as, with bursting heart, he battled to defeat it.

He launched himself and struck, and, as M'Bongu swayed, collapsed and fell, Otho fell with him, and upon him.

The gong rang.

The seconds leapt into the ring and carried the boxers to their respective corners.

"Carry him out o' the ring," said Joe, as they reached Otho's corner, into which Sailor Harris lifted the chair.

William Bossom, who held Otho's feet, eyed the speaker apprehensively.

"Cor! He won't arf curse us, Joe," he said. "He'd knock us abaht if we . . ."

"Ere, wot's the game?" interrupted Sailor Harris, thrusting the chair beneath Otho. "You can't do that, Joe. . . . Not till the minute's up and he ain't come round when the gong goes."

"I'll punch *you* on the nose, Bill Bossom," he added.

"Carry him . . ." began Joe ferociously.

"If you three chattering magpies would get on with your job, it'd be a sound scheme," observed Otho, opening the still serviceable eye. . . . "I'm all right. . . . I'm . . . er . . . resting."

With a heavy sigh Joe set to work like one possessed and, for the ninety-five remaining seconds, dashed cold water upon Otho with one hand and fanned him with the other, while his colleagues massaged each an arm.

"Legs all right?" grunted Joe.

"Fine," said Otho, "but both eyes are closing."

"Let me chuck the sponge up, Bob," begged Joe.

"I'll chuck you up if you do," was the reply.

"You can't fight him if you can't see him, you young fool."

"I've no doubt I shall feel him, all right," grinned Otho, with swollen lips.

Joe sighed heavily.

"Look here, Bob . . . and if it was my last words, I mean it. . . . God strike me dumb if I don't. . . . You mix it in a slugging-match with that nigger again, or if it's plain you can't see 'im, up goes the sponge—an' me an' these two has you out o' the ring. . . . Even if you kick and bite us."

"Chatterbox!" replied Otho, and rose to his feet as the gong went for the tenth round.

M'Bongu advanced smiling.

"Dat a good lil' scrap," he said. "First bit o' fighting you done to-night. . . . You fight some more, *hein?* . . . Or you frightened? . . . Come on, white trash, stan' up and . . ."

Thud! Thud!

Otho had brought off a "one-two" with the lightning swiftness that that movement requires—a right followed almost instantaneously by a left lead.

Ducking beneath M'Bongu's out-shot left, he landed a tremendous left hook on his mark, and rising, drove a right at the point of M'Bongu's chin, seen for a fraction of a second *en profile*.

M'Bongu's arms dropped, his eyes rolled, and Otho, with a straight left of perfect timing, sent him spinning across the ring to fall an inert mass in the corner.

Otho leant against a post and all but prayed that M'Bongu was "out," for he realized that the red-hot pain that shot up his left arm meant that if it were not broken, either the wrist-bones, or those of the hand, were dislocated.

Anyhow, the hand was out of action, almost too painful to touch, and utterly useless for offence.

One hand and one eye—an eye that was closing fast!

M'Bongu stirred, rolled on to his back, and his right leg twitched violently, straightened and moved spasmodically to and fro, the foot describing a semi-circle upon the resin-strewn canvas.

God! He was going to recover—recover from a blow that would have put a white man to sleep for half an hour.

At the seventh count, M'Bongu drew up both his knees, at the eighth rolled over, and, like the dying gladiator, leant upon his hand.

But he was not dying. Far from it.

As his wandering eyes fell upon Otho, he spat; and Otho walked across to deal faithfully with him when he should rise.

M'Bongu rose to his knees and, for half a second after the count of nine, remained poised on one foot, one knee, and his left hand.

Suddenly he sprang, upper-cutting with his right and striking Otho a most foul blow, far below the belt, as, amidst howls of execration, he dodged Otho's right-handed drive at his grinning face.

Otho staggered back in horrid agony, and, his useless left pressed to his body in an effort to dull the torturing pain, he doubled up and blindly lashed out with his right. . . . Thank Heaven it had got home. . . . Dragging himself more erect, he saw M'Bongu staggering back. . . .

Amidst a pandemonium of shouts and cries of "*Assassin!*" from the Europeans, M'Bongu retreated on the defensive, breathing heavily.

Crab-wise, crouching, Otho followed him, one-eyed, one-handed, sick, suffering, and almost spent.

He must make an end.

He must go down fighting while he could still see, and not, helpless and blind, be butchered to make a negro holiday—the sport of this creature who had no sense of sport.

Dragging himself erect, Otho rushed, and, feinting with his otherwise useless left, drove a smashing blow at M'Bongu's throat.

M'Bongu threw up his right knee, catching Otho in the pit of the stomach.

A furious burning indignation nerved Otho—indignation against the referee,—fool, swine, drunkard, ignoramus or whatever he might be.

He heard Joe's roar of "*Foul!*" and, falling, heard no more.

Deaf. . . . Blind. . . . Sick. . . . Out. . . .

No.

He could hear. . . . He could see. . . . The cry was *HUIT*. . . . And mistily he could see M'Bongu's feet.

"*Up, Bellême!*" . . . *Up!* . . . "*I Saye and I Doe . . .*"

And Otho Bellême was up.

M'Bongu rushed and Otho struck. M'Bongu staggered, Otho saw a black blur and, gathering himself together, with the absolute uttermost last ounce of his strength, he launched himself upon it, delivering as he did so, the blow of his lifetime.

And then his knees sagged. . . . His brain reeled. . . . Loud waters surged about his ears. . . . He could not see. . . . He swayed, awaiting the *coup de grâce*. . . . He collapsed.

The waters subsided.

Neuf. . . . Dix. . . .

He climbed to his feet as though weighed down with mighty cables of iron.

"*OUT!*"

No! No! It wasn't fair. It wasn't right. He had been on his feet before the word. He was *not* "out" . . . But he was blind.

His broken left hand he extended in defence, and with his right he pushed up the flesh above one eye.

Where was M'Bongu?

Lying defeated, senseless, at his feet!

OUT.

IV

ROGUES AT BAY

1

THE FIGHT IN THE INN

(FROM CHARLES READE'S "THE CLOISTER AND THE HEARTH")

Gerard the painter and his travelling-companion, the soldier Denys, lodge at a hostelry which they discover, too late, from a friendly maid-servant, to be the headquarters of a band of robbers with whom the landlord is in league. The girl goes for help, while the travellers await developments. The robbers appear, headed by a giant nicknamed "The Abbot." The two friends affect to be weary and go to their room, but find that the door has a false door-post, which renders the bolt useless.

PRESENTLY there was a gentle scratching, not half so loud as a mouse's, and the false door-post opened by degrees, and left a perpendicular space, through which the light streamed in. The door, had it been bolted, would now have hung by the bare tip of the bolt, which went into the real door-post, but as it was, it swung gently open of itself. It opened inwards, so Denys did not raise his cross-bow from the ground, but merely grasped his dagger.

The candle was held up, and shaded from behind by a man's hand.

He was inspecting the beds from the threshold, satisfied that his victims were both in bed.

The man glided into the apartment. But at the first step something in the position of the cupboard and chair made him uneasy. He ventured no farther, but put the candle on the floor and stooped to peer under the chair; but as he stooped an iron hand grasped his shoulder, and a dagger was driven so fiercely through his neck that the point came out at his gullet. There was a terrible hiccough, but no cry; and half a dozen silent strokes followed in swift succession, each a death-blow, and the assassin was laid noiselessly on the floor.

Denys closed the door, bolted it gently, drew the post to, and even while he was doing it whispered Gerard to bring a chair. It was done.

"Help me set him up."

"Dead!"

"Parbleu."

"What for?"

"Frighten them! Gain time."

Even while saying this, Denys had whipped a piece of string round the dead man's neck, and tied him to the chair, and there the ghastly figure sat fronting the door.

"Denys, I can do better. Saints forgive me!"

"What? Be quick then, we have not many moments."

And Denys got his cross-bow ready, and, tearing off his straw mattress, reared it before him and prepared to shoot the moment the door should open, for he had no hope any more would come singly when they found the first did not return.

While thus employed, Gerard was busy about the seated corpse, and to his amazement Denys saw a luminous glow spreading rapidly over the white face.

Gerard blew out the candle; and on this the corpse's face shone still more like a glow-worm's head.

Denys shook in his shoes, and his teeth chattered.

"What, in Heaven's name, is this?" he whispered.

"Hush! 'tis but phosphorus, but 'twill serve."

"Away! they will surprise thee."

In fact uneasy mutterings were heard below, and at last a deep voice said, "What makes him so long? is the *drôle* rifling them?"

It was their comrade they suspected then, not the enemy. Soon a step came softly but rapidly up the stairs; the door was gently tried.

When this resisted, which was clearly not expected, the sham post was very cautiously moved, and an eye no doubt peeped through the aperture; for there was a howl of dismay, and the man was heard to stumble back and burst into the kitchen, where a Babel of voices rose directly on his return.

Gerard ran to the dead thief and began to work on him again.

"Back, madman!" whispered Denys.

"Nay, nay. I know these ignorant brutes; they will not venture here while. I can make him ten times more fearful."

"At least close that opening! Let them not see you at your devilish work."

Gerard closed the sham post, and in half a minute his brush made the dead head a sight to strike any man with dismay. He put his art to a strange use, and one unparalleled perhaps in the history of mankind. He illuminated his dead enemy's face to frighten his living foe:

the staring eyeballs he made globes of fire; the teeth he left white, for so they were more terrible by the contrast; but the palate and tongue he tipped with fire, and made one lurid cavern of the red depths the chap-fallen jaw revealed; and on the brow he wrote in burning letters, "La Mort." And while he was doing it the stout Denys was quaking, and fearing the vengeance of Heaven; for one man's courage is not another's; and the band of miscreants below were quarrelling and disputing loudly, and now without disguise.

The steps that led down to the kitchen were fifteen, but they were nearly perpendicular: there was therefore in point of fact no distance between the besiegers and besieged, and the latter now caught almost every word. At last one was heard to cry out, "I tell ye the devil has got him and branded him with hell-fire. I am more like to leave this cursed house than go again into a room that is full of fiends!"

"Art drunk? or mad? or a coward?" said another.

"Call me a coward, I'll give thee my dagger's point, and send thee where Pierre sits o' fire for ever."

"Come, no quarrelling when work is afoot," roared a tremendous diapason, "or I'll brain ye both with my fist, and send ye where we shall all go soon or late."

"The Abbot," whispered Denys gravely.

He felt the voice he had just heard could belong to no man but the colossus he had seen in passing through the kitchen. It made the place vibrate. The quarrelling continued some time, and then there was a dead silence.

"Look out, Gerard."

"Ay. What will they do next?"

"We shall soon know."

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Acutely as they listened, they had heard of late no sound on the stair. Yet there—on the door-post, at the edge of the stream of moonlight, were the tips of the fingers of a hand.

The nails glistened.

Presently they began to crawl and crawl down towards the bolt, but with infinite slowness and caution. In so doing they crept into the moonlight. The actual motion was imperceptible, but slowly, slowly the fingers came out whiter and whiter, but the hand between the main knuckles and the wrist remained dark. Denys slowly raised his cross-bow.

He levelled it. He took a long steady aim.

Gerard palpitated. At last the cross-bow twanged. The hand was instantly nailed, with a stern jar, to the quivering door-post. There was a scream of anguish. "Cut," whispered Denys eagerly, and Gerard's uplifted sword descended and severed the wrist with two swift blows. A body sank down moaning outside.

The hand remained inside, immovable, with blood trickling from it down the wall. The fierce bolt, slightly barbed, had gone through it and deep into the real door-post.

"Two," said Denys, with terrible cynicism.

He strung his cross-bow, and kneeled behind his cover again.

"The next will be the Abbot."

The wounded man moved, and presently crawled down to his companions on the stairs, and the kitchen door was shut.

There nothing was heard now but low muttering. The last incident had revealed the mortal character of the weapons used by the besieged.

"I begin to think the Abbot's stomach is not so great as his body," said Denys.

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when the following events happened all in a couple of seconds. The kitchen door was opened roughly, a heavy but active man darted up the stairs without any manner of disguise, and a single ponderous blow sent the door not only off its hinges, but right across the room on to Denys' fortification, which it struck so rudely as nearly to lay him flat. And in the doorway stood a colossus with a glittering axe.

He saw the dead man with the moon's blue light on half his face, and the red light on the other half and inside his chap-fallen jaws; he stared, his arms fell, his knees knocked together, and he crouched with terror.

"LA MORT!" he cried, in tones of terror, and turned and fled. In which act Denys started up and shot him through both jaws. He sprang with one bound into the kitchen and there leaned on his axe, spitting blood and teeth and curses.

Denys strung his bow and put his hand into his breast.

He drew it out dismayed.

"My last bolt is gone," he groaned.

"But we have our swords, and you have slain the giant."

"No, Gerard," said Denys gravely, "I have not. And the worst is, I have wounded him. Fool! to shoot at a retreating lion. He had never faced thy handiwork again, but for my meddling."

"Ha! to your guard! I hear them open the door."

Then Denys, depressed by the one error he had committed in all this fearful night, felt convinced his last hour had come. He drew his sword, but like one doomed. But what is this? a red light flickers on the ceiling. Gerard flew to the window and looked out. There were men with torches, and breastplates gleaming red. "We are saved! Armed men!" And he dashed his sword through the window shouting, "Quick! Quick! we are sore pressed."

"Back!" yelled Denys; "they come: strike none but him."

That very moment the Abbot and two men with naked weapons rushed into the room. Even as they came, the outer door was hammered fiercely, and the Abbot's comrades hearing it, and seeing the torchlight, turned and fled. Not so the terrible Abbot: wild with rage and pain, he spurned his dead comrade, chair and all, across the room, then, as the men faced him on each side with kindling eyeballs, he waved his tremendous axe like a feather right and left, and cleared a space, then lifted it to hew them both in pieces.

His antagonists were inferior in strength, but not in swiftness and daring, and above all they had settled how to attack him. The moment he reared his axe, they flew at him like cats, and both together. If he struck a full blow with his weapon he would most likely kill one, but the other would certainly kill him: he saw this, and intelligent as well as powerful, he thrust the handle fiercely in Denys' face, and, turning, jobbed with the steel at Gerard. Denys went staggering back covered with blood. Gerard had rushed in like lightning, and, just as the axe turned to descend on him, drove his sword so fiercely through the giant's body, that the very hilt sounded on his ribs like the blow of a pugilist, and Denys, staggering back to help his friend, saw a steel point come out of the Abbot behind.

The stricken giant bellowed like a bull, dropped his axe, and clutching Gerard's throat tremendously, shook him like a child. Then Denys with a fierce snarl drove his sword into the giant's back. "Stand firm now!" and he pushed the cold steel through and through the giant and out at his breast.

Thus horribly spitted on both sides, the Abbot gave a violent shudder, and his heels hammered the ground convulsively. His lips, fast turning blue, opened wide and deep, and he cried, "LA MORT!—LA MORT!—LA MORT!!" the first time in a roar of despair, and then twice in a horror-stricken whisper, never to be forgotten.

Just then the street door was forced.

Suddenly the Abbot's arms whirled like windmills, and his huge body wrenched wildly and carried them to the doorway, twisting their wrists and nearly throwing them off their legs.

"He'll win clear yet," cried Denys; "out, steel! and in again!"

They tore out their smoking swords, but ere they could stab again, the Abbot leaped full five feet high, and fell with a tremendous crash against the door below, carrying it away with him like a sheet of paper, and through the aperture the glare of torches burst on the awe-struck faces above, half blinding them.

The thieves at the first alarm had made for the back door, but driven thence by a strong guard ran back to the kitchen, just in time to see the lock forced out of the socket, and half a dozen mailed archers burst in upon them. On these in pure despair they drew their swords.

But ere a blow was struck on either side, the staircase door behind them was battered into their midst with one ponderous blow, and with it the Abbot's body came flying, hurled as they thought by no mortal hand, and rolled on the floor spouting blood from back and bosom in two furious jets, and quivered, but breathed no more.

The thieves, smitten with dismay, fell on their knees directly, and the archers bound them, while, above, the rescued ones still stood like statues rooted to the spot, their dripping swords extended in the red torchlight, expecting their indomitable enemy to leap back on them as wonderfully as he had gone.

THE DEATH OF BLACK-BEARD THE PIRATE

(FROM CAPTAIN JOHNSON'S "GENERAL HISTORY OF THE PIRATES")

Edward Teach, commonly known as Black-beard, was one of the fiercest and most redoubtable of the pirates that infested the Spanish Main. The capture of his ship by Lieutenant Maynard and his death, as he was cocking another pistol, are here narrated.

THE 17th of November, 1718, the lieutenant sailed from Kicquetan, in James River, in Virginia, and the 21st in the evening came to the mouth of the Ocracoke Inlet where he got sight of the pirate. This expedition was made with all imaginable secrecy, and the officer managed with all the prudence that was necessary, stopping all boats and vessels he met with in the river from going up, and therefore preventing any intelligence from reaching Black-beard, and receiving at the same time an account from them all of the place where the pirate was lurking. But notwithstanding this caution, Black-beard had information of the design from His Excellency of the province, whose secretary, Mr. Knight, wrote him a letter particularly concerning it, intimating that he had sent him four of his men, which were all he could meet with in or about town, and so bid him be upon his guard. These men belonged to Black-beard, and were sent from Bath-Town to Ocracoke Inlet, where the sloop lay, which is about twenty leagues.

Black-beard had heard several reports which happened not to be true, and so gave the less credit to this, nor was he convinced till he saw the sloops, whereupon he put his vessel in a posture of defence. He had no more than twenty-five men on board, so he gave out to all the vessels he spoke with that he had forty. When he had prepared for battle, he set down and spent the night in drinking with the master of a trading sloop who, 'twas thought, had more business with Teach than he should have had.

Lieutenant Maynard came to an anchor, for the place being shoal

and the channel intricate, there was no getting in where Teach lay that night. But in the morning he weighed and sent his boat ahead of the sloops to sound, and coming within gunshot of the pirate, received his fire. Whereupon Maynard hoisted the King's colours and stood directly towards him, with the best way that his sails and oars could make. Black-beard cut his cable, and endeavoured to make a running fight, keeping a continual fire at his enemies with his guns. Mr. Maynard not having any, kept a constant fire with small arms, while some of his men laboured at their oars.

In a little time Teach's sloop ran aground, and Mr. Maynard's drawing more water than that of the Pirate, he could not come near him; so he anchored within half a gunshot of the enemy, and in order to lighten his vessel, that he might run him aboard, the lieutenant ordered all his ballast to be thrown overboard, and all the water (i.e. watercasks) to be staved, and then weighed and stood for him. Upon which Black-beard hailed him in this rude manner: "Damn you for villains, who are you? And from whence came you?"

The lieutenant made him answer, "You may see by our colours we are no pirates."

Black-beard bid him send his boat on board, that he might see who he was: but Mr. Maynard replied thus, "I cannot spare my boat, but I will come aboard of you as soon as I can, with my sloop."

Upon this, Black-beard took a glass of liquor, and drank to him with these words: "Damnation seize my soul if I give you quarter or take any from you."

In answer to which Mr. Maynard told him that he expected no quarter from him, nor should he give him any.

By this time Black-beard's sloop floated, as Mr. Maynard's sloops were rowing towards him, which, being not above a foot high in the waist and consequently the men all exposed, as they came near together (there being hitherto little or no execution done on either side), the Pirate fired a broadside, charged with all manner of small shot—a fatal stroke to them—the sloop the lieutenant was in having twenty men killed and wounded and the other sloop nine. This could not be helped, for, there being no wind, they were obliged to keep to their oars, otherwise the pirate would have got away from him, which, it seems, the lieutenant was resolute to prevent.

After this unlucky blow Black-beard's sloop fell broadside to the shore. Mr. Maynard's other sloop, which was called the *Ranger*, fell astern, being, for the present, disabled. So the lieutenant find-

ing his own sloop had way and would soon be on board of Teach, he ordered all his men down for fear of another broadside, which must have been their destruction and the loss of the expedition. Mr. Maynard was the only person that kept the deck, except the man at the helm, whom he directed to lie down snug, and the men in the hold were ordered to get their pistols and their swords ready for close fighting, and to come up at his command; in order to which, two ladders were placed in the hatchway for the more expedition. When the lieutenant's sloop boarded the other, Captain Teach's men threw in several new-fashioned sort of grenadoes, viz. case bottles filled with powder and small shot, slugs, and pieces of lead or iron, with a quick match at the end of it, which, being lighted outside, presently runs into the bottle to the powder. As it is instantly thrown on board, it generally does great execution, besides putting all the crew into a confusion; but by good providence, they had not that effect here, the men being in the hold. And Black-beard, seeing few or no hands aboard, told his men that they were all knocked on the head except three or four; "and therefore," says he, "let's jump on board and cut them to pieces."

Whereupon, under the smoke of one of the bottles just mentioned, Black-beard enters with fourteen men, over the bows of Maynard's sloop, and were not seen by him until the air cleared. However, he just then gave a signal to his men, who all rose in an instant and attacked the pirates with as much bravery as ever was done upon such an occasion. Black-beard and the lieutenant fired the first pistol at each other, by which the Pirate received a wound; and then engaged with swords, till the lieutenant's unluckily broke, and (he) stepping back to cock a pistol, Black-beard, with his cutlass, was striking at that instant that one by which the lieutenant came off with a small cut over his fingers.

They were so closely and warmly engaged, the lieutenant and twelve men against Black-beard and fourteen, till the sea was tintured with blood round the vessel. Black-beard received a shot in his body from the pistol that Lieutenant Maynard discharged, yet he stood his ground, and fought with great fury till he received five-and-twenty wounds, and five of them by shot. At length, as he was cocking another pistol, having fired several before, he fell down dead; by which time eight more out of the fourteen dropped, and all the rest, much wounded, jumped overboard and called out for quarter, which was granted; though it was only prolonging their lives for a few days. The

sloop *Ranger* came up, and attacked the men that remained in Black-beard's sloop, with equal bravery, till they likewise cried for quarter.

Here was an end of that courageous brute, who might have passed in the world for a hero had he been employed in a good cause. His destruction, which was of such consequence to the plantations, was entirely owing to the conduct and bravery of Lieutenant Maynard and his men, who might have destroyed him with much less loss had they had a vessel with great guns. But they were obliged to use small vessels, because the holes and places he lurked in would not admit of others of greater draught. And it was no small difficulty for this gentleman to get to him, having grounded his vessel at least a hundred times, in getting up the river, besides other discouragements enough to have turned back any gentleman without dishonour who was less resolute and bold than this lieutenant. The broadside that did so much mischief before they boarded, in all probability saved the rest from destruction; for before that, Teach had little or no hopes of escaping, and therefore had posted a resolute fellow, a negro whom he had bred up, with a lighted match in the powder-room, with commands to blow up, when he should give him orders, which was as soon as the lieutenant and his men could have entered, that so he might have destroyed his conquerors; and when the negro found how it went with Black-beard, he could hardly be persuaded from the rash action by two prisoners that were then in the hold of the sloop.

What seems a little odd is that some of these men who behaved so bravely against Black-beard went afterwards a-pirating themselves, and one of them was taken along with Roberts. But I do not find that any of them were provided for, except one that was hanged. But this is a digression.

The lieutenant caused Black-beard's head to be severed from his body and hung up at the bowsprit end; then he sailed to Bath-Town, to get relief for his wounded men.

It must be observed, that in rummaging the Pirate's ship they found several letters and written papers, which discovered the correspondence betwixt Governor Eden, the Secretary, Collector, also some traders at New York, and Black-beard. It is likely he had regard enough for his friends to have destroyed these papers before the action, in order to hinder them from falling into such hands where the discovery would be of no use either to the interest or reputation of these fine gentlemen, if it had not been his fixed resolution to have blown all up together, when he found no possibility of escaping.

When the lieutenant came to Bath-Town he made bold to seize, in the Governor's store-house, the sixty hogsheads of sugar, and from honest Mr. Knight, twenty; which, it seems, was their dividend of the plunder taken in the French ship. The latter did not long survive this shameful discovery, for being apprehensive that he might be called to an account for these trifles, he fell sick with the fright, and died in a few days.

After the wounded men were pretty well recovered the lieutenant sailed back to the men-of-war in James River, in Virginia, with Black-beard's head still hanging at the bowsprit end, and fifteen prisoners, thirteen of whom were hanged. It appeared upon trial that one of them, viz. Samuel Odell, was taken out of the trading sloop but the night before the engagement. This poor fellow was a little unlucky as his first entering upon his new trade, there appearing no less than seventy wounds upon him after the action; notwithstanding which, he lived and was cured of them all. The other person that escaped the gallows was one Israel Hands, the master of Black-beard's sloop, and formerly captain of the same, before the *Queen Ann's Revenge* was lost in Topsail Inlet.

The aforesaid Hands happened not to be in the fight, but was taken afterwards ashore at Bath-Town, having been some time before disabled by Black-beard in one of his savage humours, after the following manner. One night, drinking in his cabin with Hands, the pilot, and another man, Black-beard, without any provocation, privately draws out a small pair of pistols, and cocks them under the table. Which being perceived by the other man, he withdrew and went upon deck, leaving Hands, the pilot, and the Captain together. When the pistols were ready, he blew out the candle and crossing his hands, discharged them at his company. Hands, the master, was shot through the knee and lamed for life; the other pistol did no execution. Being asked the meaning of this, he only answered by damning them, "That if he did not now and then kill one of them, they would forget who he was."

THE FIGHTING CHAPLAIN

(FROM CAPTAIN SMITH'S "COMPLETE HISTORY OF THE HIGHWAYMEN")

JACK BIRD having got a good horse, was resolved to venture once more upon higher matters than robbing foot passengers; so meeting on Salisbury Plain with the mad E—l of P—, and his chaplain, in a coach, he commanded them to stand, as having no other retinue but the coachman and one footman. Then desiring his lordship to spare him a little money, his honour told him that if he had any of him he should fight for it. Jack Bird instantly pulled out four pistols, and swore that if his lordship did not deliver his money, he should have every one through his body.

Quoth his honour then, "I tell you what, sir, lay your pistols aside, and I'll box you for what money I have, against nothing."

"That's a fair challenge," replied Jack, who was a very stout fellow, "which I'll accept, provided none that belong to your honour shall be near us."

So that E—l coming out of his coach, "Hold, hold, my lord," said the chaplain, "I'll box him first myself," and accordingly throwing off his gown and cassock and stepping out of the coach, to it he and Jack Bird went, who so paid the chaplain in a quarter of an hour that he could not see out of his eyes.

Then breathing himself a little and stepping up to the side of the coach, quoth he, "Now, my Lord, if you please, I'll have one bout with you."

But his honour replied, "No, no, hold there, sir. If you can beat my chaplain, you'll beat me, for, by G—d, he could beat me before."

So giving Jack Bird twenty guineas, he rode away very well contented.

BLOOD UPON THE ALTAR

(FROM RICHARD BLACKMORE'S "LORNA DOONE")

This tells of the final encounter between John Ridd, farmer, wrestler, and accepted suitor of the beautiful Lorna, and the Carver Doone, the last of the fierce family who had been the terror of Exmoor for years. When John was a small boy, his father had been caught and slain by the Doones, but he learned when he grew up that Carver Doone had been responsible for the murder. John led an army of stalwarts into the Doone valley, and exterminated the whole family, with the exception of Carver, who escaped, and tried to wreck John's happiness on his wedding-day.

EVERY thing was settled smoothly, and without any fear or fuss, that Lorna might find end of troubles, and myself of eager waiting, with the help of Parson Bowden, and the good wishes of two counties. I could scarce believe my fortune, when I looked upon her beauty, gentleness, and sweetness, mingled with enough of humour, and warm woman's feeling, never to be dull or tiring; never themselves to be weary.

For she might be called a woman now; although a very young one, and as full of playful ways, or perhaps I may say ten times as full, as if she had known no trouble. To wit, the spirit of bright childhood, having been so curbed and straightened, ere its time was over, now broke forth, enriched and varied with the garb of conscious maidenhood. And the sense of steadfast love, and eager love enfolding her, coloured with so many tinges all her looks, and words, and thoughts, that to me it was the noblest vision even to think about her.

But this was far too bright to last, without bitter break, and the plunging of happiness in horror, and of passionate joy in agony. My darling, in her softest moments, when she was alone with me, when the spark of defiant eyes was veiled beneath dark lashes, and the challenge of gay beauty passed into sweetest invitation; at such times of her purest love and warmest faith in me, a deep abiding fear would flutter in her bounding heart, as of deadly fate's approach. She would cling to me

and nestle to me, being scared of coyishness, and lay one arm around my neck, and ask if I could do without her.

Hence, as all emotions haply, of those who are more to us than ourselves, find within us stronger echo, and more perfect answer, so I could not be regardless of some hidden evil; and my dark misgivings deepened as the time drew nearer. I kept a steadfast watch on Lorna, neglecting a field of beans entirely, as well as a litter of young pigs, and a cow somewhat given to jaundice. And I let Jem Slocombe go to sleep in the tallat all one afternoon, and Bill Dadds draw off a bucket of cider, without so much as a "by your leave." For these men knew that my knighthood, and my coat of arms, and (most of all) my love, were greatly against good farming; the sense of our country being—and perhaps it may be sensible—that a man who sticks up to be any thing, must allow himself to be cheated.

But I never did stick up, nor would, though all the parish bade me; and I whistled the same tunes to my horses, and held my plough-tree just the same, as if no King, nor Queen, had ever come to spoil my tune or hand. For this thing, nearly all the men around our part upbraided me, but the women praised me; and for the most part these are right, when themselves are not concerned.

However humble I might be, no one, knowing any thing of our part of the country, would for a moment doubt that now here was a great to-do, and talk of John Ridd, and his wedding. The fierce fight with the Doones so lately, and my leading of the combat (though I fought not more than need be), and the vanishing of Sir Counsellor, and the galloping madness of Carver, and the religious fear of the women that this last was gone to hell—for he himself had declared that his aim, while he cut through our yeomanry; also their remorse, that he should have been made to go thither, with all his children left behind—these things, I say (if ever I can again contrive to say any thing), had led to the broadest excitement about my wedding of Lorna. We heard that people meant to come from more than thirty miles around, upon excuse of seeing my stature and Lorna's beauty; but in good truth out of sheer curiosity, and the love of meddling.

Our clerk had given notice, that not a man should come inside the door of his church without shilling-fee; and women (as sure to see twice as much) must every one pay two shillings. I thought this wrong; and, as churchwarden, begged that the money might be paid into mine own hands, when taken. But the clerk said that was against all law; and he had orders from the parson to pay it to him without any delay.

So as I always obey the parson, when I care not much about a thing, I let them have it their own way; though feeling inclined to believe, sometimes, that I ought to have some of the money.

Dear mother arranged all the ins and outs of the way in which it was to be done; and Annie and Lizzie, and all the Snowes, and even Ruth Huckaback (who was there, after great persuasion), made such a sweeping of dresses, that I scarcely knew where to place my feet, and longed for a staff, to put by their gowns. Then Lorna came out of a pew half-way, in a manner which quite astonished me, and took my left hand in her right, and I prayed God that it were done with.

My darling looked so glorious, that I was afraid of glancing at her, yet took in all her beauty. She was in a fright, no doubt; but nobody should see it; whereas I said (to myself at least), "I will go through it like a grave-digger."

Lorna's dress was of pure white, clouded with faint lavender (for the sake of the old Earl Brandir), and as simple as need be, except for perfect loveliness. I was afraid to look at her, as I said before, except when each of us said, "I will"; and then each dwelled upon the other.

It is impossible for any, who have not loved as I have, to conceive my joy and pride, when after ring and all was done, and the parson had blessed us, Lorna turned to look at me, with her playful glance subdued, and deepened by this solemn act.

Her eyes, which none on earth may ever equal, or compare with, told me such a tale of hope, and faith, and heart's devotion, that I was almost amazed, thoroughly as I knew them. Darling eyes, the clearest eyes, the loveliest, the most loving eyes—the sound of a shot rang through the church, and those eyes were dim with death.

Lorna fell across my knees, when I was going to kiss her, as the bridegroom is allowed to do, and encouraged, if he needs it; a flood of blood came out upon the yellow wood of the altar steps; and at my feet lay Lorna, trying to tell me some last message out of her faithful eyes. I lifted her up, and petted her, and coaxed her, but it was no good; the only sign of life remaining was a drip of bright red blood.

Some men know what things befall them in the supreme time of their life—far above the time of death—but to me comes back as a hazy dream, without any knowledge in it, what I did, or felt, or thought, with my wife's arms flapping, flapping, around my neck, as I raised her up, and softly put them there. She sighed a long sigh on my breast, for her last farewell to life, and then she grew so cold, and cold, that I asked the time of year.

It was now Whit-Tuesday, and the lilacs all in blossom; and why I thought of the time of year, with the young death in my arms, God, or His angels, may decide, having so strangely given us. Enough that so I did, and looked; and our white lilacs were beautiful. Then I laid my wife in my mother's arms, and begging that no one would make a noise, went forth for my revenge.

Of course, I knew who had done it. There was but one man upon earth, or under it, where the Devil dwells, who could have done such a thing—such a thing. I used no harsher word about it, while I leaped upon our best horse, with bridle but no saddle, and set the head of Kickums towards the course now pointed out to me. Who showed me the course, I cannot tell. I only know that I took it. And the men fell back before me.

Weapon of no sort had I. Unarmed, and wondering at my strange attire (with a bridal vest, wrought by our Annie, and red with the blood of the bride), I went forth just to find out this; whether in this world there be, or be not, God of justice.

With my vicious horse at a furious speed, I came upon Black Barrow Down, directed by some shout of men, which seemed to me but a whisper. And there, about a furlong before me, rode a man on a great black horse; and I knew that the man was Carver Doone.

"Thy life, or mine," I said to myself; "as the will of God may be. But we two live not upon this earth, one more hour, together."

I knew the strength of this great man; and I knew that he was armed with a gun—if he had time to load again, after shooting my Lorna,—or at any rate with pistols, and a horseman's sword as well. Nevertheless, I had no more doubt of killing the man before me, than a cook has of spitting a headless fowl.

Sometimes seeing no ground beneath me, and sometimes heeding every leaf, and the crossing of the grass blades, I followed over the long moor, reckless whether seen or not. But only once, the other man turned round, and looked back again; and then I was beside a rock, with a reedy swamp behind me.

Although he was so far before me, and riding as hard as ride he might, I saw that he had something on the horse in front of him; something which needed care, and stopped him from looking backward. In the whirling of my wits, I fancied first that this was Lorna; until the scene I had been through fell across hot brain, and heart, like the drop at the close of a tragedy. Rushing there, through crag and quag, at utmost speed of a maddened horse, I saw, as of another's fate, calmly

(as on canvas laid), the brutal deed, the piteous anguish, and the cold despair.

The man turned up the gully leading from the moor to Cloven Rocks, through which John Fry had tracked Uncle Ben, as of old related. But as Carver entered it, he turned round, and beheld me not a hundred yards behind; and I saw that he was bearing his child, little Ensie, before him. Ensie also descried me, and stretched his hands, and cried to me; for the face of his father frightened him.

Carver Doone, with a vile oath, thrust spurs into his flagging horse, and laid one hand on a pistol-stock, whence I knew that his slung carbine had received no bullet, since the one that had pierced Lorna. And a cry of triumph rose from the black depths of my heart. What cared I for pistols? I had no spurs, neither was my horse one to need the rowel; I rather held him in than urged him, for he was fresh as ever; and I knew that the black steed in front, if he breasted the steep ascent, where the track divided, must be in our reach at once.

His rider knew this; and, having no room in the rocky channel to turn and fire, drew rein at the crossways sharply, and plunged into the black ravine leading to the Wizard's Slough. "Is it so?" I said to myself, with brain and head cold as iron: "though the foul fiend come from the slough, to save thee; thou shalt carve it, Carver."

I followed my enemy carefully, steadily, even leisurely; for I had him, as in a pitfall, whence no escape might be. He thought that I feared to approach him, for he knew not where he was: and his low disdainful laugh came back. "Laugh he who wins," thought I.

A gnarled and half-starved oak, as stubborn as my own resolve, and smitten by some storm of old, hung from the crag above me. Rising from my horse's back, although I had no stirrups, I caught a limb, and tore it (like a wheat-awn) from the socket. Men show the rent even now, with wonder; none with more wonder than myself.

Carver Doone turned the corner suddenly, on the black and bottomless bog; with a start of fear he reigned back his horse, and I thought he would have rushed upon me. But instead of that, he again rode on; hoping to find a way round the side.

Now there is a way between cliff and slough, for those who know the ground thoroughly, or have time enough to search it; but for him there was no road, and he lost some time in seeking it. Upon this he made up his mind; and wheeling, fired, and then rode at me.

His bullet struck me somewhere, but I took no heed of that. Fearing only his escape, I laid my horse across the way, and with the limb

of the oak struck full on the forehead his charging steed. Ere the slash of the sword came nigh me, man and horse rolled over, and well-nigh bore my own horse down, with the power of their onset.

Carver Doone was somewhat stunned, and could not arise for a moment. Meanwhile, I leaped on the ground, and waited, smoothing my hair back, and baring my arms, as though in the ring for wrestling. Then the little boy ran to me, clasped my leg, and looked up at me: and the terror in his eyes made me almost fear myself.

"Ensie, dear," I said quite gently, grieving that he should see his wicked father killed, "run up yonder round the corner, and try to find a bunch of bluebells for the pretty lady." The child obeyed me, hanging back, and looking back, and then laughing, while I prepared for business. There and then, I might have killed mine enemy, with a single blow, while he lay unconscious; but it would have been foul play.

With a sullen and black scowl, the Carver gathered his mighty limbs, and arose, and looked round for his weapons; but I had put them well away. Then he came to me, and gazed, being wont to frighten thus young men.

"I would not harm you, lad," he said, with a lofty style of sneering: "I have punished you enough, for most of your impertinence. For the rest I forgive you; because you have been good, and gracious, to my little son. Go, and be contented."

For answer, I smote him on the cheek, lightly, and not to hurt him: but to make his blood leap up. I would not sully my tongue, by speaking to a man like this.

There was a level space of sward, between us and the slough. With the courtesy derived from London, and the processions I had seen, to this place I led him. And that he might breathe himself, and have every fibre cool, and every muscle ready, my hold upon his coat I loosed, and left him to begin with me, whenever he thought proper.

I think he felt that his time was come. I think he knew from my knitted muscles, and the firm arch of my breast, and the way in which I stood; but most of all from my stern blue eyes; that he had found his master. At any rate a paleness came, an ashy paleness on his cheeks, and the vast calves of his legs bowed in, as if he were out of training.

Seeing this, villain as he was, I offered him first chance. I stretched forth my left hand, as I do to a weaker antagonist, and I let him have the hug of me. But in this I was too generous; having forgotten my pistol-wound, and the cracking of one of my short lower ribs. Carver

Doone caught me round the waist, with such a grip as never yet had been laid upon me.

I heard my rib go; I grasped his arm, and tore the muscle out of it ¹ (as the string comes out of an orange); then I took him by the throat, which is not allowed in wrestling; but he had snatched at mine; and now was no time of dalliance. In vain he tugged, and strained, and writhed, dashed his bleeding fist into my face, and flung himself on me, with gnashing jaws. Beneath the iron of my strength—for God that day was with me—I had him helpless in two minutes, and his blazing eyes lolled out.

"I will not harm thee any more," I cried, so far as I could for panting, the work being very furious: "Carver Doone, thou art beaten: own it, and thank God for it; and go thy way, and repent thyself."

It was all too late. Even if he had yielded in his ravening frenzy, for his beard was frothy as a mad dog's jowl; even if he would have owned that, for the first time in his life, he had found his master; it was all too late.

The black bog had him by the feet; the sucking of the ground drew on him, like the thirsty lips of death. In our fury, we had heeded neither wet nor dry, nor thought of earth beneath us. I myself might scarcely leap, with the last spring of o'er-laboured legs, from the engulfing grave of slime. He fell back, with his swarthy breast (from which my gripe had rent all clothing), like a hummock of bog-oak, standing out the quagmire; and then he tossed his arms to heaven, and they were black to the elbow, and the glare of his eyes was ghastly. I could only gaze and pant: for my strength was no more than an infant's, from the fury and the horror. Scarcely could I turn away, while, joint by joint, he sank from sight.

¹ A far more terrible clutch than this is handed down, to weaker ages, of the great John Ridd.—R.D.B.

THE MUTINY ON THE CONVICT-SHIP

(FROM "FOR THE TERM OF HIS NATURAL LIFE," BY MARCUS
CLARKE)

The episode takes place on the convict-ship "Malabar," outward bound with its terrible freight. The convicts are even more closely packed in their stifling prison than the brutal regulations permit, and an outbreak of typhus drives them to desperation. Headed by the giant Gabbett, the Moocher, and Femmy Vetch, alias "The Crow," they plot to break out when Pine, the ship's doctor, visits the prison at eight bells, and seize the ship. The young sentry, Miles, has been bribed by a woman accomplice, Sarah Purfoy, not to fire. The ship's officers, however, have some suspicions that a mutiny is afoot, and are consequently on their guard.

At seven o'clock there had been also a commotion in the prison. The news of the fever had awoke in the convicts all that love of liberty which had but slumbered during the monotony of the earlier part of the voyage. Now that death menaced them, they longed fiercely for the chance of escape which seemed permitted to freemen. "Let us go out!" they said, each man speaking to his particular friend. "We are locked up here to die like sheep." Gloomy faces and desponding looks met the gaze of each, and sometimes across this gloom shot a fierce glance that lighted up its blackness, as a lightning-flash renders luridly luminous the indigo dulness of a thunder-cloud. By and by, in some inexplicable way, it came to be understood that there was a conspiracy afloat, that they were to be released from their shambles, that some amongst them had been plotting their freedom. The 'tween decks held its foul breath in wondering anxiety, afraid to breathe its suspicions. The influence of this predominant idea showed itself by a strange shifting of atoms. The mass of villainy, ignorance, and innocence began to be animated with something like a uniform movement. Natural affinities came together, and like allied itself to like, falling noiselessly into harmony, as the pieces of glass and coloured beads in a kaleidoscope assume mathematical forms.

By seven bells it was found that the prison was divided into three parties—the desperate, the timid, and the cautious. These three parties had arranged themselves in natural sequence. The mutineers, headed by Gabbett, Vetch, and the Moocher, were nearest to the door; the timid—boys, old men, innocent poor wretches condemned on circumstantial evidence, or rustics condemned to be turned into thieves for pulling a turnip—were at the farther end, huddling together in alarm; and the prudent—that is to say, all the rest, ready to fight or fly, advance or retreat, assist the authorities or their companions, as the fortune of the day might direct—occupied the middle space. The mutineers proper numbered, perhaps, some thirty men, and of these thirty only half a dozen knew what was really about to be done.

The ship's bell strikes the half-hour, and as the cries of the three sentries passing the word to the quarter-deck die away, Gabbett, who has been leaning with his back against the door, nudges Jemmy Vetch.

"Now, Jemmy," says he in a whisper, "tell 'em!"

The whisper being heard by those nearest the giant, a silence ensues, which gradually spreads like a ripple over the surface of the crowd, reaching even the bunks at the farther end.

"Gentlemen," says Mr. Vetch, politely sarcastic in his own hang-dog fashion, "myself and my friends here are going to take the ship for you. Those who like to join us had better speak at once, for in about half an hour they will not have the opportunity."

He pauses, and looks round with such an impertinently confident air, that three waverers in the party amidsthips slip nearer to hear him.

"You needn't be afraid," Mr. Vetch continues, "we have arranged it all for you. There are friends waiting for us outside, and the door will be open directly. All we want, gentlemen, is your wote and interest—I mean your——"

"Gaffing agin!" interrupts the giant, angrily. "Come to business, carn't yer? Tell 'em they may like it or lump it, but we mean to have the ship, and them as refuses to join us we mean to chuck overboard. That's about the plain English of it!"

This practical way of putting it produces a sensation, and the conservative party at the other end look in each other's faces with some alarm. A grim murmur runs round, and somebody near Mr. Gabbett laughs a laugh of mingled ferocity and amusement, not reassuring to timid people.

"What about the sogers?" asks a voice from out the ranks of the cautious.

"D—— the sogers!" cries the Moocher, moved by a sudden inspira-

tion. "They can but shoot yer, and that's as good as dyin' of typhus any way!"

The right chord had been struck now, and with a stifled roar the prison admitted the truth of the sentiment. "Go on, old man!" cries Jemmy Vetch to the giant, rubbing his thin hands with eldritch glee. "They're all right!" And then, his quick ears catching the jingle of arms, he adds, "Stand by now for the door—one rush'll do it."

It was eight o'clock and the relief guard was coming from the after deck. The crowd of prisoners round the door held their breath to listen. "It's all planned," says Gabbett, in a low growl. "W'en the door hopens we rush, and we're in among the guard afore they know where they are. Drag 'em back into the prison, grab the h'arm rack, and it's all over."

"They're very quiet about it," says the Crow, suspiciously. "I hope it's all right."

"Stand from the door, Miles," says Pine's voice outside, in its usual calm accents.

The Crow was relieved. The tone was an ordinary one, and Miles was the soldier whom Sarah Purfoy had bribed not to fire. All had gone well.

The keys clashed and turned, and the bravest of the prudent party, who had been turning in his mind the notion of risking his life for a pardon, to be won by rushing forward at the right moment and alarming the guard, checked the cry that was in his throat as he saw the men round the door draw back a little for their rush, and caught a glimpse of the giant's bristling scalp and bared gums.

"NOW!" cries Jemmy Vetch, as the iron-plated oak swung back, and with the guttural snarl of a charging wild boar, Gabbett hurled himself out of the prison.

The red line of light which glowed for an instant through the doorway was blotted out by a mass of figures. All the prison surged forward, and before the eye could wink, five, ten, twenty of the most desperate were outside. It was as though a sea, breaking against a stone wall, had found some breach through which to pour its waters. The contagion of battle spread. Caution was forgotten; and those at the back, seeing Jemmy Vetch raised upon the crest of that human billow which reared its black outline against an indistinct perspective of struggling figures, responded to his grin of encouragement by rushing furiously forward.

Suddenly a horrible roar like that of a trapped wild beast was heard. The rushing torrent choked in the doorway, and from out the lantern

glow into which the giant had rushed, a flash broke, followed by a groan, as the perfidious sentry fell back shot through the breast. The mass in the doorway hung irresolute, and then by sheer weight of pressure from behind burst forwards, and as it so burst, the heavy door crashed into its jambs, and the bolts were shot into their places.

All this took place by one of those simultaneous movements which are so rapid in execution, so tedious to describe in detail. At one instant the prison door had opened, at the next it had closed. The picture which had presented itself to the eyes of the convicts was as momentary as are those of the thaumatoscope. The period of time that had elapsed between the opening and the shutting of the door could have been marked by the musket shot.

The report of another shot, and then a noise of confused cries, mingled with the clashing of arms, informed the imprisoned men that the ship had been alarmed. How would it go with their friends on deck? Would they succeed in overcoming the guards, or would they be beaten back? They would soon know; and in the hot dusk, straining their eyes to see each other, they waited for the issue. Suddenly the noises ceased, and a strange rumbling sound fell upon the ears of the listeners.

What had taken place?

This—the men pouring out of the darkness into the sudden glare of the lanterns, rushed, bewildered, across the deck. Miles, true to his promise, did not fire, but the next instant Vickers had snatched the firelock from him, and leaping into the stream, turned about and fired down towards the prison. The attack was more sudden than he had expected, but he did not lose his presence of mind. The shot would serve a double purpose. It would warn the men in the barrack, and perhaps check the rush by stopping up the doorway with a corpse. Beaten back, struggling, and indignant, amid the storm of hideous faces, his humanity vanished, and he aimed deliberately at the head of Mr. James Vetch; the shot, however, missed its mark, and killed the unhappy Miles.

Gabbett and his companions had by this time reached the foot of the companion ladder, there to encounter the cutlasses of the doubled guard gleaming redly in the glow of the lanterns. A glance up the hatchway showed the giant that the arms he had planned to seize were defended by ten firelocks, and that, behind the open doors of the partition which ran abaft the mizenmast, the remainder of the detachment stood to their arms. Even his dull intellect comprehended that the desperate project

had failed, and that he had been betrayed. With the roar of despair which had penetrated into the prison, he turned to fight his way back, just in time to see the crowd in the gangway recoil from the flash of the musket fired by Vickers. The next instant, Pine and two soldiers, taking advantage of the momentary cessation of the press, shot the bolts, and secured the prison.

The mutineers were caught in a trap.

The narrow space between the barracks and the barricade was choked with struggling figures. Some twenty convicts, and half as many soldiers, struck and stabbed at each other in the crowd. There was barely elbowroom, and attacked and attackers fought almost without knowing whom they struck. Gabbett tore a cutlass from a soldier, shook his huge head, and calling on the Moocher to follow, bounded up the ladder, desperately determined to brave the fire of the watch. The Moocher, close at the giant's heels, flung himself upon the nearest soldier, and grasping his wrist, struggled for the cutlass. A brawny, bull-necked fellow next him dashed his clenched fist in the soldier's face, and the man, maddened by the blow, let go the cutlass, and drawing his pistol, shot his new assailant through the head. It was this second shot that had aroused Maurice Frere.

As the young lieutenant sprang out upon the deck, he saw by the position of the guard that others had been more mindful of the safety of the ship than he. There was, however, no time for explanation, for, as he reached the hatchway, he was met by the ascending giant, who uttered a hideous oath at the sight of this unexpected adversary, and, too close to strike him, locked him in his arms. The two men went down together. The guard on the quarter-deck dared not fire at the two bodies that, twined about each other, rolled across the deck, and for a moment Mr. Frere's cherished existence hung upon the slenderest thread imaginable.

The Moocher, spattered with the blood and brains of his unfortunate comrade, had already set his foot upon the lowest step of the ladder, when the cutlass was dashed from his hand by a blow from a clubbed firelock, and he was dragged roughly backwards. As he fell upon the deck, he saw the Crow spring out of the mass of prisoners who had been, an instant before, struggling with the guard, and, gaining the cleared space at the bottom of the ladder, hold up his hands, as though to shield himself from a blow. The confusion had become suddenly stilled, and upon the group before the barricade had fallen that mysterious silence which had perplexed the inmates of the prison.

They were not perplexed for long. The two soldiers who, with the assistance of Pine, had forced to the door of the prison, rapidly unbolted that trap-door in the barricade, of which mention has been made in a previous chapter, and, at a signal from Vickers, three men ran the loaded howitzer from its sinister shelter near the break of the barrack berths, and training the deadly muzzle to a level with the opening in the barricade, stood ready to fire.

"Surrender!" cried Vickers, in a voice from which all "humanity" had vanished. "Surrender, and give up your ringleaders, or I'll blow you to pieces!"

There was no tremor in his voice, and though he stood, with Pine by his side, at the very mouth of the levelled cannon, the mutineers perceived, with that acuteness which imminent danger brings to the most stolid of brains, that, did they hesitate an instant, he would keep his word. There was an awful moment of silence, broken only by a skurrying noise in the prison, as though a family of rats, disturbed at a flour cask, were scampering to the ship's side for shelter.

This skurrying noise was made by the convicts rushing to their berths to escape the threatened shower of grape; to the twenty desperadoes cowering before the muzzle of the howitzer it spoke more eloquently than words. The charm was broken; their comrades would refuse to join them. The position of affairs at this crisis was a strange one. From the opened trap-door came a sort of subdued murmur, like that which sounds within the folds of a sea-shell, but, in the oblong block of darkness which it framed, nothing was visible. The trap-door might have been a window looking into a tunnel. On each side of this horrible window, almost pushed before it by the pressure of one upon the other, stood Pine, Vickers, and the guard. In front of the little group lay the corpse of the miserable boy whom Sarah Purfoy had led to ruin; and forced close upon, yet shrinking back from, the trampled and bloody mass, crouched, in mingled terror and rage, the twenty mutineers. Behind the mutineers, withdrawn from the patch of light thrown by the open hatchway, the mouth of the howitzer threatened destruction; and behind the howitzer, backed up by an array of brown musket barrels, sullenly glowed the tiny fire of the burning match in the hand of Vickers's trusty servant.

The entrapped men looked up the hatchway, but the guard had already closed in upon it, and some of the ship's crew—with that carelessness of danger characteristic of sailors—were peering down upon them. Escape was hopeless.

"One minute!" cried Vickers, confident that one second would be enough—"one minute to go quietly, or——"

"Surrender, mates, for God's sake!" shrieked some unknown wretch from out of the darkness of the prison. "Do you want to be the death of us?"

Jemmy Vetch, feeling, by that curious sympathy which nervous natures possess, that his comrades wished him to act as spokesman, raised his shrill tones. "We surrender," he said. "It's no use getting our brains blown out." And raising his hands, he obeyed the motion of Vickers's finger, and led the way towards the barrack.

"Bring the irons forward, there!" shouted Vickers, hastening from his perilous position; and before the last man had filed past the still smoking match, the clink of hammers announced that the Crow had resumed those fetters which had been knocked off his dainty limbs a month previously in the Bay of Biscay.

In another moment the trap-door was closed, the howitzer rumbled back to its cleatings, and the prison breathed again.

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In the meantime, a scene almost as exciting had taken place on the upper deck. Gabbett, with the blind fury which the consciousness of failure brings to such brute-like natures, had seized Frere by the throat, determined to put an end to at least one of his enemies. But desperate though he was, and with all the advantage of weight and strength upon his side, he found the young lieutenant a more formidable adversary than he had anticipated.

Maurice Frere was no coward. Brutal and selfish though he might be, his bitterest enemies had never accused him of lack of physical courage. Indeed, he had been—in the rollicking days of old that were gone—celebrated for the display of very opposite qualities. He was an amateur at manly sports. He rejoiced in his muscular strength, and, in many a tavern brawl and midnight riot of his own provoking, had proved the fallacy of the proverb which teaches that a bully is *always* a coward. He had the tenacity of a bulldog,—once let him get his teeth in his adversary, and he would hold on till he died. In fact he was, as far as personal vigour went, a Gabbett with the education of a prize-fighter; and, in a personal encounter between two men of equal courage, science tells more than strength. In the struggle, however, that was now taking place, science seemed to be of little value. To the inexperienced eye, it would appear that the frenzied giant, griping the throat of the man

who had fallen beneath him, must rise from the struggle an easy victor. Brute force was all that was needed,—there was neither room nor time for the display of cunning or fence.

But knowledge, though it cannot give strength, gives coolness. Taken by surprise as he was, Maurice Frere did not lose his presence of mind. The convict was so close upon him, that there was no time to strike; but, as he was forced backwards, he succeeded in crooking his knee round the thigh of his assailant, and thrust one hand into his collar. Over and over they rolled, the bewildered sentry not daring to fire, until the ship's side brought them up with a violent jerk, and Frere realized that Gabbett was below him. Pressing with all the might of his muscles, he strove to resist the leverage which the giant was applying to turn him over, but he might as well have pushed against a stone wall. With his eyes protruding, and every sinew strained to its uttermost, he was slowly forced round, and he felt Gabbett releasing his grasp, in order to draw back and aim at him an effectual blow. Disengaging his left hand, Frere suddenly allowed himself to sink, and then drawing up his right knee, struck Gabbett beneath the jaw, and as the huge head was forced backwards by the blow, dashed his fist into the brawny throat. The giant reeled backwards, and falling on his hands and knees, was in an instant surrounded by sailors.

Now began and ended, in less time than it takes to write it, one of those Homeric struggles of one man against twenty, which are none the less heroic because the Ajax is a convict, and the Trojans merely ordinary sailors. Shaking his assailants to the deck as easily as a wild boar shakes off the dogs which clamber upon his bristly sides, the convict sprang to his feet, and whirling the snatched-up cutlass round his head, kept the circle at bay. Four times did the soldiers round the hatchway raise their muskets, and four times did the fear of wounding the men who had flung themselves upon the enraged giant compel them to restrain their fire. Gabbett, his stubbly hair on end, his bloodshot eyes glaring with fury, his great hand opening and shutting in air, as though it gasped for something to seize, turned himself about from side to side—now here, now there, bellowing like a wounded bull. His coarse shirt, rent from shoulder to flank, exposed the play of his huge muscles. He was bleeding from a cut on his forehead, and the blood, trickling down his face, mingled with the foam on his lips, and dropped sluggishly on his hairy breast. Each time that an assailant came within reach of the swinging cutlass, the ruffian's form dilated with a fresh access of passion. At one moment bunched with clinging adversaries—his arms,

legs, and shoulders a hanging mass of human bodies—at the next, free, desperate, alone in the midst of his foes, his hideous countenance contorted with hate and rage, the giant seemed less a man than a demon, or one of those monstrous and savage apes which haunt the solitudes of the African forests. Spurning the mob who had rushed in at him, he strode towards his risen adversary, and aimed at him one final blow that should put an end to his tyranny for ever. A notion that Sarah Purfoy had betrayed him, and that the handsome soldier was the cause of the betrayal, had taken possession of his mind, and his rage had concentrated itself upon Maurice Frere. The aspect of the villain was so appalling, that, despite his natural courage, Frere, seeing the backward sweep of the cutlass, absolutely closed his eyes with terror, and surrendered himself to his fate.

As Gabbett balanced himself for the blow, the ship, which had been rocking gently on a dull and silent sea, suddenly lurched—the convict lost his balance, swayed, and fell. Ere he could rise he was pinioned by twenty hands.

Authority was almost instantaneously triumphant on the upper and lower decks. The mutiny was over.

THE DEATH OF CAPTAIN STARLIGHT

(FROM "ROBBERY UNDER ARMS," BY ROLF BOLDREWOOD)

Captain Starlight's gang of bushrangers has at last been run to earth by the police.

PRETTY well settled it came to be amongst us that we should be well into Queensland before the police were handy. Starlight and Jim were having a pitch about the best way to get aboard one of these pearling craft, and how jolly it would be. The captains didn't care two straws what sort of passengers they took aboard so long as they had the cash and were willing to give a hand when they were wanted.

We were just walking towards the horses to make a fresh start, when Starlight puts up his hand. We all listened. There was no mistaking the sound we heard—horses at speed, and mounted men at that. We were in a sort of angle. We couldn't make back over the infernal boggy creek we'd just passed, and they seemed to be coming on two sides at once.

"By ——! they're on us," says Starlight; and he cocks his rifle and walks over quite cool to the old horse. "Our chance, boys, is to exchange shots, and ride for it. Keep cool, don't waste your fire, and if we can drop a couple of them we may slip them yet."

We hadn't barely time to get to our horses, when out of the timber they came—in two lots—three on each side. Police, sure enough; and meeting us. That shook us a bit. How the devil did they get ahead of us after the pace we'd ridden the last twenty-four hours, too? When they came close we could see how it was, Sir Ferdinand and three troopers on one side; Inspector Goring, with two more, on the left; while outside, not far from the lead, rode Sir Watkin, the Braidwood black tracker—the best hand at that work in the three colonies, if you could keep him sober.

Now we could see why they took us in front. He had kept out

wide when he saw the tracks were getting hot, so as to come in on the road ahead of us, and meet us full in the teeth.

He had hit it off well this time, blast him! We couldn't make back on account of the creek, and we had double our number to fight, *and good men too, before we could break through, if we could do that.*

Our time was come if we hadn't the devil's own luck; but we had come out of as tight a place before, and might do it again.

When they were within fifty yards Sir Ferdinand calls out, "Surrender! It's no use, men," says he; "I don't want to shoot you down, but you must see you're outnumbered. There's no disgrace in yielding now."

"Come on!" says Starlight; "don't waste your breath! There's no man here will be taken alive."

With that, Goring lets dive and sends a bullet that close by my head I put my hand up to feel the place. All the rest bangs away, black tracker and all. I didn't see Sir Ferdinand's pistol smoke. He and Starlight seemed to wait. Then Jim and I fires steady. One trooper drops down badly hit, and my man's horse fell like a log and penned his rider under him, which was pretty nigh as good.

"Steady does it," says Starlight, and he makes a snap shot at the tracker, and breaks his right arm.

"Three men spoiled," says he; "one more to the good and we may charge."

Just as he said this the trooper that was underneath the dead horse crawls from under him, the off side, and rests his rifle on his wither. Starlight had just mounted when every rifle and pistol in the two parties was fired at one volley. We had drawn closer to one another, and no one seemed to think of cover.

Rainbow rears up, gives one spring, and falls backward with a crash. I thought Starlight was crushed underneath him, shot through the neck and flank as he was, but he saved himself somehow, and stood with his hand on Rainbow's mane, when the old horse rose again all right, head and tail well up, and as steady as a rock. The blood was pouring out of his neck, but he didn't seem to care two straws about it. You could see his nostril spread out and his eye looking twice as big and fiery.

Starlight rests his rifle a minute on the old horse's shoulder, and the man that had fired the shot fell over with a kick. Something hits me in the ribs like a stone, and another on the right arm, which drops down

just as I was aiming at a young fellow with light hair that had ridden pretty close up, under a myall tree.

Jim and Sir Ferdinand let drive straight at one another the same minute. They both meant it this time. Sir Ferdinand's hat turned part round on his head, but poor old Jim drops forward on his face and tears up the grass with his hands. I knew what that sign meant.

Goring rides straight at Starlight and calls on him to surrender. He had his rifle on his hip, but he never moved. There he stood, with his hand on the mane of the old horse. "Keep back if you're wise, Goring," says he, as quiet and as steady as if he'd been cattle-drafting. "I don't want to have your blood on my head; but if you must——"

Goring had taken so many men in his day that he was got over confident-like. He thought Starlight would give in at the last moment or miss him in the rush. My right arm was broken, and now that Jim was down we might both be took, which would be a great crow for the police. Anyhow, he was a man that didn't know what fear was, and he chanced it.

Two of the other troopers fired point blank at Starlight as Goring rode at him, and both shots told. He never moved, but just lifted his rifle as the other came up at the gallop. Goring threw up his arms, and rolled off his horse a dying man.

Starlight looked at him for a minute.

"We're quits," he says; "it's not once or twice either you've pulled trigger on me. I knew this day would come."

Then he sinks down slowly by the side of the old horse and leans against his fore leg, Rainbow standing quite steady, only tossing his head up and down the old way. I could see, by the stain on Starlight's mouth and the blood on his breast, he'd been shot through the lungs.

I was badly hit too, and going in the head, though I didn't feel it so much at the time. I began to hear voices like in a dream; then my eyes darkened, and I fell like a log.

When I came to, all the men were off their horses, some round Goring—him they lifted up and propped against a tree; but he was stone dead, any one could see. Sir Ferdinand was on his knees beside Starlight, talking to him, and the other saying a word now and then, quite composed, and quiet-like.

"Close thing, Morringer, wasn't it?" I heard him say. "You were too quick for us; another day and we'd been out of reach."

"True enough. Horses all dead beat; couldn't raise a remount for love or money."

"Well, the game's up now, isn't it? I've held some good cards too, but they never told, somehow. I'm more sorry for Jim—and—that poor girl, Aileen, than I am for myself."

"Don't fret—there's a good fellow. Fortune of war, you know. Anything else?"

Here he closed his eyes, and seemed gone; but he wakes up again, and begins in a dreamy way. His words came slowly, but his voice never altered one bit.

"I'm sorry I fired at poor Warrigal now. No dog ever was more faithful than he has been to me all through till now; but I was vexed at his having sold Dick and poor Jim."

"We knew we should find you here or hereabouts without that," says Sir Ferdinand.

"How was that?"

"Two jockey-boys met you one night at Calga gate; one of them recognized Locket by the white patch on her neck. He wired to us at the next station."

"So you were right after all, Dick. It was a mistake to take that mare. I've always been confoundedly obstinate; I admit that. Too late to think of it now, isn't it?"

"Anything else I can do?" says Sir Ferdinand.

"Give her this ring," he pulls it off his finger, "and you'll see Maddie Barnes gets the old horse, won't you? Poor old Rainbow! I know she'll take care of him; and a promise is a promise."

"All right. He's the property of the Government now, you know; but I'll square it somehow. The General won't object under the circumstances."

Then he shuts his eyes for a bit. After a while he calls out—

"Dick! Dick Marston."

"I'm here," says I.

"If you ever leave this, tell Aileen that her name was the last word I spoke—the very last. She foresaw this day; she told me so. I've had a queer feeling too, this week back. Well, it's over now. I don't know that I'm sorry, except for others. I say, Morringer, do you remember the last pigeon match you and I shot in, at Hurlingham?"

"Why, good God!" says Sir Ferdinand, bending down, and looking into his face. "It can't be; yes, by Jove, it is——"

He spoke some name I couldn't catch, but Starlight put a finger on his lips, and whispers—

"You won't tell, will you? Say you won't!"

The other nodded.

He smiled just like his old self.

"Poor Aileen!" he says, quite faint. His head fell back. Starlight was dead!

THE NORTHUMBERLAND STREET TRAGEDY

(FROM A CONTEMPORARY NEWSPAPER)

THE death of Major William Murray, of Ossemsley Manor, Christchurch, Hants, whose remains were cremated at Woking yesterday, recalls the fact that the veteran officer had survived by over forty years one of the most terrific experiences which can possibly fall to the lot of man. The Northumberland Street tragedy of July, 1861, remains a classic example in London's annals of crime for the ferocious and bloody nature of its hand-to-hand encounter. Briefly, Major Murray was inveigled into the office of a moneylender, who shot him twice. A terrific struggle followed, at the end of which the major, himself desperately wounded, had overcome his assailant, and succeeded in escaping through the window, leaving the other in a practically dying condition.

Contemporary records describing the crime introduce the story with a dramatic description of the major's flight from the fatal house. Just before noon on July 12, 1861, some workmen employed at the back of No. 16, Northumberland Street, heard two pistol shots fired, apparently on the first floor. While they were wondering at the cause a man suddenly appeared at one of the windows, which he threw open, thrusting one leg out as though to jump. Seemingly in a state of frantic excitement he gripped some sort of weapon in his hand, and his face was covered with blood. In reply to a shout of inquiry from below, the man called out that "murder had been done." The workmen then entered the house to find the doors on the first floor locked against them. Meanwhile the wounded man, with an energy born of his frenzied desire to escape, succeeded in reaching the back yard, having passed sideways along a very slight ledge, and scrambled to the ground by the aid of a flimsy water-pipe. He was caught by the workmen after a chase down a side passage, and proved to be desperately wounded in the back of the neck, with much of his hair singed or burnt. He was astonished to be told that he was fearfully wounded, and could

only exclaim, "It's that damned fellow upstairs, Grey." At Charing Cross Hospital he gave the name of Major Murray. His chief injury proved to be a long wound at the back of the head, from the base of which a bullet was eventually extracted. The missile had struck the spine with such force as to be clearly indented.

The first floor from which the fugitive had escaped was occupied by a solicitor and bill-discounter named Roberts. When the doors had been forced an appalling scene was presented. In the back room blood was everywhere. A broken table lay in the centre; broken wine bottles and pistols, cabinet drawers and papers scattered the floor. Double doors led into the front room, which had a like appearance, disorder, but near the door, and still gripping the handle, crouched the figure of a man, so frightfully injured as to be scarcely recognizable. Practically he had been battered to pieces. The skull was smashed in, a cheek-bone crushed, the temple artery divided, the left side of the face a mere mass of pulp. The right hand was crushed, and its index finger broken. The left hand and arm were terribly beaten. This shockingly mutilated figure proved to be Roberts, the moneylender, and he was soon lying as a fellow inmate with Major Murray in Charing Cross Hospital.

All London rang with the mystery. Roberts sank under his injuries and died on the evening of the 19th. Until questioned by Inspector Mackenzie he preserved an absolute silence as to the affray, and to the police officer he gave but scanty information. "Murray did it all," he repeated again and again. "He attacked me with the tongs, and hit me over the head with a glass bottle. We met by accident in Hungerford Market, and he came to my office with me about a loan. Murray shot himself in the neck, and then attacked me with the tongs like a demon." Such was the story told in disjointed phrases by the dying man; but the true facts of one of the fiercest struggles ever recorded were elicited when the survivor himself went into the witness-box at the coroner's inquest.

Major Murray, who gave his address as 32, Harley Street, and Tottenham, stated that when he was passing up from Hungerford Bridge he was accosted by a stranger, who questioned him regarding the intention of the Grosvenor Hotel Company (of which the witness was a director) to borrow money. With a view of discussing certain details, Major Murray was induced to accompany the stranger to his chambers, No. 16, Northumberland Street. The witness's narrative then proceeded.

"I asked him for his card of address. He said, 'Immediately,' got up from the table, walked round me, and began rummaging among the papers on the desk. I thought he was looking for his card, and took no particular notice. Presently I felt a touch in the back of my neck—there was a report of a pistol, and I dropped off the chair on the ground. I was perfectly paralysed. I could not move any part of my body. My head, however, was quite clear. I was lying with my face to the fender, and when he fired I believe he left the room.

"After some little time I felt returning life in my leg and arm, and was just raising myself on my elbow when I heard a door open, and he came in again. He immediately walked up behind me, and fired a pistol into my right temple. I dropped back on the carpet, and the blood gushed all over my face and eyes and mouth in a regular torrent. He either stooped or knelt down close behind me, for I could feel his breath, and he watched close to see if I was dead.

"I then made up my mind to pretend to be so. I felt that the bleeding was bringing life back to me fast all over my body, which was tingling to the finger's ends. I knew if I could get on my feet I should be able to make a fight for it. After he had knelt behind me for some time, he got up and walked away. I then opened my eyes and took a look round, and saw a pair of tongs within a few inches of my hand.

"Feeling that my strength was returning to me, and there being the whole length of the room between us, I seized the tongs, and sprang to my feet. He was then at the window. Hearing me move, he turned and faced me. I at once rushed at him and made a heavy blow at him with the tongs, which missed. I then seized them short by the middle, and made a dash into his chest and face, which knocked him over on his back.

"I got my knees on his chest, and tried to smash his head with the tongs. They were too long, and he got them in both his hands firmly. I struggled hard for some time to get them away, but he was as strong as I, and I could not do it. I looked round for something else to hit him with, and close to my right hand I saw a large black bottle, which I caught in my right hand, and, shaking the tongs with my left to keep him occupied, I hit him full with all my force on the middle of the forehead, smashing it to pieces.

"That made him quiver all over, but still he did not let go the tongs; so I caught hold of a metal vase and dashed it at his head with all my might, but I missed him. Then, as I saw there was nothing

else at hand, I set to work desperately to get the mastery of the tongs, which he was holding all the time.

"During all this he was on his back, close under the window nearest the door. After a long struggle I got the tongs. As they came into my hands I lost my balance, and fell back, but was up again in an instant, and by that time he was rising into a sitting position, which gave me a full, fair blow at his head with the tongs, and I gave it him with all my might and main. I repeated it three or four times.

"He hid his head under the table to escape my blows, and I then hit him over the back of the neck; and, in order to disable his hands, I hit him hard over the wrists. I then thought he was sufficiently disabled, and tried to get out, but the door of the room was locked. I then went through the folding-doors of the front room, and tried that way, but that door was locked too.

"In coming back through the folding-doors I met him again face to face, walking towards me. I took a step back in order to get a full swing, and hit him on the head again with the tongs. He fell forward on his face through the folding-doors, as if he was dead. I pushed his feet through the doors, shut them, and threw up the window to get out."

Major Murray declared that he had not the slightest idea why he should have been attacked by a man whom he had never seen before. But the mystery was cleared up by the statement of another witness at the inquest, a woman who knew Major Murray, and who had got herself into the toils of the dead moneylender. The latter had been recently making advances to her, which she had repelled, and he conceived the idea of getting rid of the man he considered as his rival. After a protracted inquiry, the coroner's jury brought in a verdict of justifiable homicide, declaring that "Major Murray slew the deceased to save his own life."

RAZUMOV'S CONFESSION

(FROM "UNDER WESTERN EYES," BY JOSEPH CONRAD)

Razumov, a young student of liberal ideas, but a strong believer in tradition, was suddenly called upon to shelter an anarchist fellow-student who had been responsible for a bomb outrage. In a moment of despair and anger he betrayed Haldin, only to find himself a marked man from his acquaintanceship with Haldin. He is employed by the Government as a spy, for his action has given him the confidence of the revolutionaries. His sinister duty takes him to Geneva, but his task is uncongenial and his courage is lacking. Finally, to rid himself of the burden of his conscience, he confesses his action to Haldin's associates.

"VERY well," Razumov interrupted, with a shade of impatience, for his heart was beating strongly. Then, mastering his voice so far that there was even a touch of irony in his clear, forcible enunciation—

"In justice to that individual, the much ill-used peasant, Ziemianitch, I now declare solemnly that the conclusions of that letter calumniate a man of the people—a bright Russian soul. Ziemianitch had nothing to do with the actual arrest of Victor Haldin."

Razumov dwelt on the name heavily, and then waited till the faint, mournful murmur which greeted it had died out.

"Victor Victorovitch Haldin," he began again, "acting with, no doubt, noble-minded imprudence, took refuge with a certain student of whose opinions he knew nothing but what his own illusions suggested to his generous heart. It was an unwise display of confidence. But I am not here to appreciate the actions of Victor Haldin. Am I to tell you of the feelings of that student, sought out in his obscure solitude, and menaced by the complicity forced upon him? Am I to tell you what he did? It's a rather complicated story. In the end the student went to General T—— himself, and said, 'I have the man who killed de P—— locked up in my room, Victor Haldin—a student like myself.'"

A great buzz arose, in which Razumov raised his voice.

"Observe—that man had certain honest ideals in view. But I didn't come here to explain him."

"No. But you must explain how you know all this," came in grave tones from somebody.

"A vile coward!" This simple cry vibrated with indignation. "Name him!" shouted other voices.

"What are you clamouring for?" said Razumov disdainfully, in the profound silence which fell on the raising of his hand. "Haven't you all understood that I am that man?"

Laspara went away brusquely from his side and climbed upon his stool. In the first forward surge of people towards him, Razumov expected to be torn to pieces, but they fell back without touching him, and nothing came of it but noise. It was bewildering. His head ached terribly. In the confused uproar he made out several times the name of Peter Ivanovitch, the word "judgment," and the phrase, "But this is a confession," uttered by somebody in a desperate shriek. In the midst of the tumult, a young man, younger than himself, approached him with blazing eyes.

"I must beg you," he said, with venomous politeness, "to be good enough not to move from this spot till you are told what you are to do."

Razumov shrugged his shoulders.

"I came in voluntarily."

"Maybe. But you won't go out till you are permitted," retorted the other.

He beckoned with his hand, calling out, "Louisa! Louisa! come here, please"; and, presently, one of the Laspara girls (they had been staring at Razumov from behind the samovar) came along, trailing a bedraggled tail of dirty flounces, and dragging with her a chair, which she set against the door, and, sitting down on it, crossed her legs. The young man thanked her effusively, and rejoined a group carrying on an animated discussion in low tones. Razumov lost himself for a moment.

A squeaky voice screamed, "Confession or no confession, you are a police spy!"

The revolutionist Nikita had pushed his way in front of Razumov, and faced him with his big, livid cheeks, his heavy paunch, bull neck, and enormous hands. Razumov looked at the famous slayer of gendarmes in silent disgust.

"And what are you?" he said, very low, then shut his eyes, and rested the back of his head against the wall.

"It would be better for you to depart now." Razumov heard a

mild, sad voice, and opened his eyes. The gentle speaker was an elderly man, with a great brush of fine hair making a silvery halo all round his keen, intelligent face. "Peter Ivanovitch shall be informed of your confession—and you shall be directed . . ."

Then, turning to Nikita, nicknamed Necator, standing by, he appealed to him in a murmur—

"What else can we do? After this piece of sincerity he cannot be dangerous any longer."

The other muttered, "Better make sure of that before we let him go. Leave that to me. I know how to deal with such gentlemen."

He exchanged meaning glances with two or three men, who nodded slightly, then turning roughly to Razumov, "You have heard? You are not wanted here. Why don't you get out?"

The Laspara girl on guard rose, and pulled the chair out of the way unemotionally. She gave a sleepy stare to Razumov, who started, looked round the room and passed slowly by her as if struck by some sudden thought.

"I beg you to observe," he said, already on the landing, "that I had only to hold my tongue. To-day, of all days since I came amongst you, I was made safe, and to-day I made myself free from falsehood, from remorse—independent of every single human being on this earth."

He turned his back on the room, and walked towards the stairs, but, at the violent crash of the door behind him, he looked over his shoulder and saw that Nikita, with three others, had followed him out. "They are going to kill me, after all," he thought.

Before he had time to turn round and confront them fairly, they set on him with a rush. He was driven headlong against the wall. "I wonder how," he completed his thought. Nikita cried, with a shrill laugh right in his face, "We shall make you harmless. You wait a bit."

Razumov did not struggle. The three men held him pinned against the wall, while Nikita, taking up a position a little on one side, deliberately swung off his enormous arm. Razumov, looking for a knife in his hand, saw it come at him open, unarmed, and received a tremendous blow on the side of his head over his ear. At the same time he heard a faint, dull detonating sound, as if someone had fired a pistol on the other side of the wall. A raging fury awoke in him at this outrage. The people in Laspara's rooms, holding their breath, listened to the desperate scuffling of four men all over the landing; thuds against the walls, a terrible crash against the very door, then all

of them went down together with a violence which seemed to shake the whole house. Razumov, overpowered, breathless, crushed under the weight of his assailants, saw the monstrous Nikita squatting on his heels near his head, while the others held him down, kneeling on his chest, gripping his throat, lying across his legs.

"Turn his face the other way," the paunchy terrorist directed, in an excited, gleeful squeak.

Razumov could struggle no longer. He was exhausted; he had to watch passively the heavy open hand of the brute descend again in a degrading blow over his other ear. It seemed to split his head in two, and all at once the men holding him become perfectly silent—soundless as shadows. In silence they pulled him brutally to his feet, rushed with him noiselessly down the staircase, and, opening the door, flung him out into the street.

He fell forward, and at once rolled over and over helplessly, going down the short slope together with the rush of running rain water. He came to rest in the roadway of the street at the bottom, lying on his back, with a great flash of lightning over his face—a vivid, silent flash of lightning which blinded him utterly. He picked himself up, and put his arm over his eyes to recover his sight. Not a sound reached him from anywhere, and he began to walk, staggering, down a long, empty street. The lightning waved and darted round him its silent flames, the water of the deluge fell, ran, leaped, drove—noiseless like the drift of mist. In this unearthly stillness his footsteps fell silent on the pavement, while a dumb wind drove him on and on, like a lost mortal in a phantom world ravaged by a soundless thunderstorm. God only knows where his noiseless feet took him to that night, here and there, and back again without pause or rest. Of one place, at least, where they did lead him, we heard afterwards; and, in the morning, the driver of the first south-shore tramcar, clanging his bell desperately, saw a bedraggled, soaked man without a hat, and walking in the roadway unsteadily with his head down, step right in front of his car, and go under.

When they picked him up, with two broken limbs and a crushed side, Razumov had not lost consciousness. It was as though he had tumbled, smashing himself, into a world of mutes. Silent men, moving unheard, lifted him up, laid him on the sidewalk, gesticulating and grimacing round him their alarm, horror, and compassion. A red face with moustaches stooped close over him, lips moving, eyes rolling. Razumov tried hard to understand the reason of this dumb show. To

those who stood around him, the features of that stranger, so grievously hurt, seemed composed in meditation. Afterwards his eyes sent out at them a look of fear and closed slowly. They stared at him. Razumov made an effort to remember some French words.

"*Je suis sourd*," he had time to utter feebly, before he fainted.

"He is deaf," they exclaimed to each other. "That's why he did not hear the car."

They carried him off in that same car. Before it started on its journey, a woman in a shabby black dress, who had run out of the iron gate of some private grounds up the road, clambered on to the rear platform and would not be put off.

"I am a relation," she insisted, in bad French. "This young man is a Russian, and I am his relation."

On this plea they let her have her way. She sat down calmly, and took his head on her lap; her scared faded eyes avoided looking at his deathlike face. At the corner of a street, on the other side of the town, a stretcher met the car. She followed it to the door of the hospital, where they let her come in and see him laid on a bed. Razumov's new-found relation never shed a tear, but the officials had some difficulty in inducing her to go away. The porter observed her lingering on the opposite pavement for a long time. Suddenly, as though she had remembered something, she ran off.

The ardent hater of all Finance ministers, the slave of Madame de S——, had made up her mind to offer her resignation as lady companion to the Egeria of Peter Ivanovitch. She had found work to do after her own heart.

But hours before, while the thunderstorm still raged in the night, there had been in the rooms of Julius Laspara a great sensation. The terrible Nikita, coming in from the landing, uplifted his squeaky voice in horrible glee before all the company—

"Razumov! Mr. Razumov! The wonderful Razumov! He shall never be any use as a spy on anyone. He won't talk, because he will never hear anything in his life—not a thing! I have burst the drums of his ears for him. Oh, you may trust me. I know the trick. Ha! Ha! Ha! I know the trick."

THE TOTTENHAM OUTRAGE

(FROM "SURVIVOR'S TALES OF FAMOUS CRIMES," BY WALTER WOOD)

JUST on the other side of Chestnut Road, at Tottenham, opposite the police station, is Schnurmann's Rubber Factory, where, in 1909, a number of aliens were employed at a very low wage. Amongst them was a Russian named Paul Hefeld, who was about twenty-six years old, and who soon learned that it was the habit of the firm to send one of their clerks to the bank in a motor-car every Saturday morning at about eleven o'clock to fetch money to pay the weekly wages. There was another Russian, called Jacob Meyer, who worked in Tottenham. Both lived in the town for some time and knew their way about quite well. At the time of the outrage both men were out of employment.

On this particular Saturday morning I had seen both Jacob and Hefeld. They were standing just outside the police station; in fact, I passed them, little suspecting what they were about to do. Jacob actually nodded to me as I passed. There was nothing unusual in the presence of these men, and often a number of aliens were to be seen loitering about the rubber works, where some of them had been employed.

I was well known to a great number of these foreigners by being brought into contact with them through wounding each other. These fights mostly happened on a Saturday night, after the men had received their wages and they had had a lot of drink.

What happened just at the beginning I did not see; but it was this. The car had been to the bank, where a clerk named Keyworth had got eighty pounds for wages. He had stepped out of the car, and was about to enter the works when the two robbers snatched the money-bag and tried to make off with it. Instantly the chauffeur, Wilson, sprang at one of them, on which the other peppered him with shots from his revolver. One bullet pierced his cap, and others made holes in his coat; but, luckily, the chauffeur escaped injury. Keyworth, too, had gallantly thrown himself on his assailant, who did his best to kill him with his revolver, and failed, though he fired several shots.

After a short, furious struggle, in which all the advantage was with the robbers, who had taken the other two completely by surprise, Jacob and Hefeld bolted, and then the chase began.

A big burly chap named George Smith, who was passing, seized Hefeld, and they both fell to the ground. Instantly Jacob fired at Smith, and a bullet went through his cap, cutting his head and causing blood to flow. Hefeld managed to wriggle clear and get on his feet, and off he went with Jacob.

The thieves still had the bag of money, and they bolted with it down Chestnut Road, pursued by the chauffeur and the clerk, as well as others. Wilson was still driving, and in the car was also Mr. Powell, the works manager at the rubber factory.

The police heard the alarm at once, and instantly P.C. Tyler and P.C. Newman rushed out and jumped into the car. Tyler was not fully dressed, and was without his helmet, and Newman, who was on reserve duty, was also without a helmet. They did not lose a second in driving after the runaways, who had already settled down to a defence which must have been well thought out and carefully planned, for Hefeld deliberately stopped to fire on his pursuers, using his left arm as a rest and firing with his right hand after taking aim, Jacob doing the loading for him.

This deliberation enabled the robbers to do immense mischief even at the start, and very soon the car was made useless through bullets striking it.

The firing and commotion made people turn out of their houses in swarms and caused a growing crowd to join in the chase. As soon as the car was out of action Tyler and Newman jumped out, and dashed on foot after the runaways, who were making for Tottenham Marshes. After leaving Chestnut Road, Jacob and Hefeld had turned into Stonely Road, and dashed on to the corner of Mitchley Road, where a little chap named Ralph Jocelyn, about ten years old, was playing.

This child, out of sheer curiosity, stopped his play and looked at the two villains who were tearing madly towards him, only a few yards away. The next thing that happened was that the poor innocent little chap was fired on and shot dead in the street where he had been playing.

By this time the runaways had gone fairly amok, and were firing at anything and anybody, and doing a lot of harm. They tore on till they reached Downs Lane, which is nearer the marshes, the pursuers including Tyler, Newman, and the chauffeur.

Tyler was a splendid officer, plucky and resourceful, and just now he found his previous experience in the army very useful; but, unfortunately, he was at a hopeless disadvantage. Dashing round the buildings, he succeeded so far that he was only about sixty yards away from the two men, and he shouted:

"Give it up—the game's over!"

Hefeld did not hesitate a second. He stopped for a moment, rested his revolver on his arm and fired, and poor Tyler, mortally wounded in the head, fell to the ground. Newman, who was standing at Tyler's side, got a second shot for himself, and had a most narrow escape, for the bullet grazed his cheek and took a small piece off his ear. The effect of these two shots will show how close the constables were to their men and the coolness and deliberation of the murderers' aim, for the pair of villains had now become murderers.

By this time a large number of private individuals had taken up the chase, as well as the police, amongst the latter being Inspector Gold and Sergeant Hale. The telephone and telegraph had been at work, and from all the surrounding stations officers had been sent on cycle and on foot to cut off the retreat of the runaways and capture them if possible.

Having killed Tyler and shot down other pursuers, the murderers managed to cross Tottenham Marshes and reach a footpath that goes to Higham's Hill, where they came across a number of men who were pulling down some disused rifle butts. Without a moment's hesitation the fugitives fired on these men, who promptly dropped their tools and ran away to seek cover. The two men then crossed a footbridge over the River Lea.

This was the stage at which I came on the scene.

After I had seen the two men standing near the police station, I rode away on my bicycle, and I was in the High Road, talking to my colleague, Sergeant Backhurst, when I received a communication from Sub-Divisional Inspector Large, who had sent out P.C. Squires—he is now dead—on a bicycle to inform every policeman within reach to hurry to the marshes to cut off the retreat of two men who were firing at everyone they could get.

We both obtained some refreshment to buck us up, and then rode as hard as we could towards the marshes, and the first sign I saw of the affair was the men running away from the rifle butts.

Some revolvers and ammunition had been served out from the police armoury, and several of us were lucky enough to be armed. When I joined in the chase, however, I had no firearm, and so I was at a great

disadvantage, and I felt this particularly when, in trying to cut off their escape, I saw the two men approaching me.

I am not a very nervous person, but when the murderers actually began firing at me I beat a hasty retreat, and was lucky enough to be able to hide myself to some extent behind a haystack; then, as they were making for me, I had to rush for the Chingford Road. I had to get across a field, and as the murderers were following me, and their firing was in full swing, it was as exciting a dash across the open road as any man could wish to have.

At this time the murderers had fairly settled into their work, and were getting over the ground partly at a trot and partly at a sharp walk, with a big mixed crowd after them. They were utterly desperate, and they had a great deal of staying power too. Nothing could have been more deliberate than their plan of campaign, for Hefeld did most of the firing, and Jacob did the loading for him. Hefeld kept halting and using his left arm as a rest for the revolver, which he deliberately fired after taking aim. It was this coolness which enabled them to do so much execution, for they killed two persons and in all wounded more than twenty, some seriously.

The excitement was now intense, and it grew as the chase went on. In crossing the field the two men came to some caravans, a little gipsy encampment. One of the gipsies, a man named Bird, hearing the commotion, looked out to see what was happening. By that time the pair were just upon him.

"You have some too!" shouted Hefeld: and as he spoke he fired several shots at Bird, who had a marvellous escape, and promptly hid himself in his van.

The ruffians hurried on, and eventually got into the Chingford Road. They must have seen that they were being headed off, and that in time they would be run to earth; but they were making a desperate bid for liberty, and they stuck at nothing.

It happened that an electric tramcar was passing, carrying only a few passengers. Instantly the pair fired at the driver and ordered him to stop, which he did. Then he made a dash for the top, which he reached, and lay down. The runaways, who had sent several bullets through the windows of the car, boarded it. Hefeld seized the conductor, dragged him through the car to the front, held the revolver at his head, and ordered him to drive away as hard as he could go, Jacob meanwhile standing on the rear platform and firing at the pursuers.

By this time the crowd had grown very much, and it had been very

unexpectedly strengthened, for some sportsmen, who were shooting at the New River Reservoirs, near Lock Bridge, saw the runaways, and they joined in the chase, as also did other gentlemen in motor-cars; while P.C. Hawkins, who had got a gun at the "Crooked Billet" public-house, and had commandeered a horse and cart, was in hot chase too. But Hawkins had ill-luck, for his horse was shot, and so he had to take up the chase on foot. Inspector Gold and Sergeant Hale and others were following.

Holding the muzzle of the revolver to the conductor's head, Hefeld forced him to get the car along; and this the conductor managed to do, though he was not used to driving. The car went at a great pace until it came to a passing-loop, where it was forced to stop to let another pass. While the car was tearing along a woman and a child who were inside were screaming, and an old man, who was also a passenger, made a gallant attempt to grapple with Jacob. He sprang at the ruffian, who, however, was too quick for him, and shot him in the neck, and so put him out of action.

At this moment, it really seemed as if the murderers had no chance of escaping further, especially as a police station would soon be passed. Hefeld saw a greengrocer's cart at the side of the road, and he shouted to Jacob to jump down and rush for the cart. This the two men did. Springing into the cart, one of the men took the reins and lashed the horse into a gallop, the other man standing at the back of the cart and firing at the crowd of pursuers, who were on foot, on bicycles, in motors, and other conveyances. They got into Forest Road, making for Epping Forest. Several shots were fired at them as they bolted but no harm was done.

At this point the two men were only about two hundred yards from the forest, and they would probably have evaded their pursuers, but, as luck would have it, a constable was standing in Forest Road on point duty, and this caused them to turn up Fulbourne Road, which runs parallel with the Great Eastern Railway.

It should be borne in mind that the party of sportsmen were totally ignorant of the fact that a boy and a policeman had been killed, and did not deliberately fire at the heads and faces of the runaways. If they had done this, the pellets from their fowling-pieces would doubtless have damaged the murderers just enough to enable them to be captured, for it was found afterwards that, though their clothing had been peppered by the pellets, their flesh had not been injured.

So far the murderers had done amazingly well, but the luck was

turning against them, and the first ugly fact they discovered was that the chain-brake was on the cart, so that one of the wheels was running dead, and this meant that the horse, in spite of the savage lashing, was soon spent and unable to get along quickly, especially as the road just there was steep.

When they saw that the cart was of no further use, the men stopped the horse and sprang out, and made a dash for the fields near Higham's Park and Hale End Station on the Great Eastern Railway.

By this time I had become possessed of a revolver, one of a pair of which P.C. Cater had been despatched with from Tottenham Police Station, with a number of rounds of ammunition, and I was so close to the men that I could easily have shot at least one of them, but, unfortunately, my revolver was not loaded.

The men, who were now exhausted, were making towards the railway bridge which crosses Ching Brook. The bank at that place was enclosed with barbed wire, and there is a big fence, so that there were serious obstacles to overcome; besides, the pursuers were now very close on the heels of the fugitives, who must have seen that the game was pretty nearly up.

Hefeld made a desperate attempt to climb the fence, but the sportsmen with the fowling-pieces had him under fire from their motor-car, and he failed and fell to the ground, which was the bank of the brook. Jacob had been luckier, for he had scaled the fence and was still on the run.

Hefeld saw at once that his murderous game was up. He had only one cartridge left, and this he turned on himself, holding the muzzle of the pistol to his head and firing. His obvious intention to kill himself on the spot did not succeed, for the bullet went round the skull, though it inflicted a dangerous wound.

Sergeant McKay, who had kept up the pursuit on his bicycle, rushed up to Hefeld and made him a prisoner, steps being taken instantly to have him conveyed to a doctor. This was done, and it seemed as if the man would live, but he did not survive a second operation which became necessary at the Prince of Wales's Hospital, Tottenham.

While Hefeld was lying mortally wounded, Jacob was trying desperately to reach the shelter of the forest, where he might well have hoped to hide for a long time, if not escape altogether. The care and cunning with which the two men had mapped out the whole of their performance was shown by the fact that in all their running away, from the moment of the robbery, they had kept to the valleys, and had not taken to the

hilly roads and tracks, and they had gone over rough and enclosed ground, which made it hard for motors and cycles to follow. For this reason I, on my cycle, in keeping up the pursuit of Jacob, lost some hundreds of yards of ground before I was well up with him again, for I was forced to keep to the roads, while he was able to take a short cut across country.

Jacob was making towards an unfinished building where some men were at work, and one of these, pretty well understanding what was happening, shouted "Stop him! Stop him!" In his excitement, and hoping to bring the runaway down, he aimed two bricks at him, but they did not hurt him. On the other hand, Jacob was luckier, for he turned round and fired two shots at the plasterer, both of which took effect. I do not know how he got on.

Jacob was now fairly at the end of his tether. He must have known that his companion was probably dead or captured, and that his own hope of escape was of the slightest; but no doubt he had absolutely made up his mind not to be taken alive and to sell his life as dearly as possible.

There was in the line of his retreat a little old-fashioned detached cottage, a quaint-looking building on the roadside, with a bit of garden in front, fenced in by wooden palsadings. Before he could get to the road and the cottage, Jacob had to crawl through a fence along a ditch, but he managed to do this, pretty well ahead of his nearest pursuers, including myself, and he ran round to the back of the cottage and burst into the place.

The occupant of the house appears to have been out at the time, talking to a neighbour, having left her two little boys in the cottage.

Jacob was undoubtedly very much exhausted by his long run and the excitement of the chase, and, having locked the kitchen door behind him, he seized a mug or tin and took a long draught of water from the tap.

The little boys, terrified at the sight of this wild, dusty, blood-stained ruffian, started screaming, whereupon he turned on them savagely and threatened to kill them if they made a noise. They were soon able to get out by the front door, for the cottage was quickly surrounded by people who had come up, including armed policemen and the sportsmen with the fowling-pieces.

At last the second murderer was trapped; but the thing to do now was to get at him. By this time Sergeant Bunn and Sergeant Hart had arrived from Edmonton.

Acting very warily, Cater and myself managed to enter the cottage through a lower window, and the first thing we heard was that Jacob had bolted upstairs, for he had shown his face at the front bedroom

window, and instantly several volleys were fired, one result being that all the glass was knocked out of the frames.

Previously to this a very courageous attempt had been made to enter the cottage by P.C. Eagles, who was in plain clothes, but I did not at the time know that he was a member of the force. He had heard the alarm, and rushed up and got a ladder, by means of which he had tried to enter the house through the back bedroom window. Failing in this, he got in through the back door, which Cater and myself had managed to open.

As soon as we had got inside the cottage we saw a number of sooty handmarks on the furniture and walls. These led us to think that the murderer had tried to get up the chimney, so I directed Cater to fire up the chimney with his revolver. This he did, but nothing seemed to be struck except soot and bricks.

Finding that Jacob was not in the lower part of the house, I opened the door which led to the little old-fashioned staircase. From this staircase a small landing, such as you often see in old cottages, led to the front bedroom. I got to this landing and opened the bedroom door—not too quickly and not too widely—and the first thing I knew was that Jacob was standing with his pistol pointing at me. He instantly fired, but I had sprung back before he could get at me. I swiftly closed the door again, and called on him to surrender.

“If you surrender,” I shouted through the doorway, “throw down the revolver. We won’t hurt you.”

Jacob muttered something which I did not understand—he did not speak good English; but I saw that he did not mean to surrender, so I suggested to Sergeant Bunn and others that, as there was a mongrel dog tied up near the back door, it should be released and taken inside and told to go upstairs, and see if it could drive Jacob out of the bedroom, or, at least, take his attention off us and give us a better chance of getting him. I pointed out that its life was not of such value as our own, and that it would be better for the dog to draw the murderer’s fire than for us to take the further risk at present. So it was agreed that the dog should have a chance, and accordingly it was untied—I believe by Sergeant Bunn—and it went into the cottage. It was not an easy matter to deal with the animal, which appeared to be very ferocious.

The dog sprang up the staircase, and promptly did what we had not been quite able to do; it frightened Jacob so much that he bolted away from the door, after shutting it.

At this stage someone entered the cottage with a double-barrelled fowling-piece, and, taking this weapon, I fired one of the barrels at the

closed door with it; but the pellets had little or no effect, and only slightly damaged the wood. I pulled the other trigger, but the barrel would not go off, so the fowling-piece was a failure.

In the meantime Cater and I had got our revolvers loaded, and we set to work. The door was very thin deal, so that our bullets went through with ease, making holes which enabled us to see into the room. It was a dangerous thing to peep through the holes, but we did so, and saw that Jacob was tearing about the room in a terribly excited state, and literally at bay.

Eagles, who did not seem to value his life as much as I valued mine, pushed up and said:

"Let me have a pop at him!"

I said: "No; I want the revolver to defend myself with." But he begged again, and after a lot of persuasion I allowed him to take it.

Then Eagles, without the slightest hesitation, hurled himself against the door, buist it open, thrust his arm round until it was well inside, and fired two shots. What the result of them was I cannot say, for it was never ascertained whether one or both struck Jacob or whether he killed himself at last with his own revolver.

When Eagles could see into the room he saw that Jacob was leaping about and laughing wildly. He shouted to us: "Come on, now!" Whereupon the man sprang on to a child's bed which was in the room, and instantly tried to pull the clothes over his head. He still had the revolver in one hand.

As soon as the cry, "Come on, now!" went up, Eagles rushed into the room and up to the bed, and I went after him.

Like a flash Eagles snatched the pistol from Jacob's hand, and I seized him by the throat and dragged him on to the floor and down the staircase, pulling him backward. The blood was oozing from his forehead, and it was clear that he was dangerously wounded by one or more bullets.

I dragged him down the stairs into the yard, where he was left lying on his back. A crowd came round him instantly. Jacob was between life and death, and there was a horrible grin on his face. He never stopped grinning, and that awful look was on his face when he died, which was soon, with the crowd round him and his eyes staring.

The crowd was terribly wrought up, and so intense was the feeling against the man that if it had not been for the police I believe they would have poured paraffin on him and burnt him where he lay. He was a dreadful sight, covered with blood and smothered with soot, showing

that, as we had suspected, he had tried to escape by climbing up the chimney. The inside of the cottage, especially the bedroom where we had got Jacob, presented a sight that was horrible to see. The pictures were all broken, the wallpaper torn and spattered with blood, and every particle of furniture damaged. The bed was the worst sight of all.

I had done my share, and I stood by and looked on at what was happening. Sergeant Bunn searched the body, and found five pounds' worth of silver upon him in one of the bags which had contained the eighty pounds the clerk had got at the bank, and which these robbers had snatched from him. The rest of the money was never found, but it was thought that they had thrown it into the River Lea and other places.

A most thorough search was made for days and days, the cottage was almost pulled to pieces, because it was thought that Jacob might have hidden the money up the chimney; but, as I say, the balance was never found. It is my impression that the two men had an accomplice, who during the chase received the bulk of the cash, leaving five pounds with Jacob to carry them on for the time being. Eighty pounds, in silver and copper, was too heavy and bulky to run off with for a long distance.

These two men must have had at least two hundred rounds of ammunition with them before starting their desperate game. Most of the firing was done by Hefeld.

THE WAR OF THE POTWELL INN

(FROM "THE HISTORY OF MR. POLLY," BY H. G. WELLS)

Mr. Polly is a little shop assistant in a small provincial town, who at last breaks away from a life of unsatisfied longings, to meet with strange adventures in the peaceful English countryside. He becomes ferryman and odd-job man at the Potwell Inn—a riverside sanctuary such as Izaak Walton loved—only to find his tenure disputed by the malevolent loafer, "Uncle Jim," who terrorizes the plump landlady and scares off all new-comers. Mr. Polly flees, but returns, goaded by his better instincts, to find the plump woman weeping in the bar and Uncle Jim approaching.

HE went to the crinkly paned window and peered out. Uncle Jim was coming down the garden path towards the house, his hands in his pockets, and singing hoarsely. Mr. Polly remembered afterwards, with pride and amazement, that he felt neither faint nor rigid. He glanced round him, seized a bottle of beer by the neck as an improvised club, and went out by the garden door. Uncle Jim stopped, amazed. His brain did not instantly rise to the new posture of things. "You!" he cried, and stopped for a moment. "You—scoot!"

"Your job," said Mr. Polly, and advanced some paces.

Uncle Jim stood swaying with wrathful astonishment, and then darted forward with clutching hands. Mr. Polly felt that if his antagonist closed, he was lost, and smote with all his force at the ugly head before him. Smash went the bottle, and Uncle Jim staggered, half stunned by the blow, and blinded with beer.

The lapses and leaps of the human mind are for ever mysterious. Mr. Polly had never expected that bottle to break. In an instant he felt disarmed and helpless. Before him was Uncle Jim, infuriated and evidently still coming on, and for defence was nothing but the neck of a bottle.

For a time our Mr. Polly has figured heroic. Now comes the

fall again; he sounded abject terror; he dropped that ineffectual scrap of glass and turned and fled round the corner of the house.

"Bolls!" came the thick voice of the enemy behind him, as one who accepts a challenge, and bleeding but indomitable, Uncle Jim entered the house.

"Bolls!" he said, surveying the bar. "Fightin' with bolls! I'll showim fightin' with bolls!"

Uncle Jim had learnt all about fighting with bottles in the Reformatory Home. Regardless of his terror-stricken aunt, he ranged among the bottled beer and succeeded, after one or two failures, in preparing two bottles to his satisfaction by knocking off the bottom, and gripping them dagger-wise by the necks. So prepared, he went forth again to destroy Mr. Polly.

Mr. Polly, freed from the sense of urgent pursuit, had halted beyond the raspberry canes, and rallied his courage. The sense of Uncle Jim victorious in the house restored his manhood. He went round by the outhouses to the riverside, seeking a weapon, and found an old paddle boathook. With this he smote Uncle Jim as he emerged by the door of the tap. Uncle Jim, blaspheming dreadfully, and with dire stabbing intimations in either hand, came through the splintering paddle like a circus rider through a paper hoop, and once more Mr. Polly dropped his weapon and fled.

A careless observer, watching him sprint round and round the inn in front of the lumbering and reproachful pursuit of Uncle Jim, might have formed an altogether erroneous estimate of the issue of the campaign. Certain compensating qualities of the very greatest military value were appearing in Mr. Polly, even as he ran; if Uncle Jim had strength and brute courage, and the rich toughening experience a Reformatory Home affords, Mr. Polly was nevertheless sober, more mobile, and with a mind now stimulated to an almost incredible nimbleness. So that he not only gained on Uncle Jim, but thought what use he might make of this advantage. The word "strategious" flamed red across the tumult of his mind. As he came round the house for the third time, he darted suddenly into the yard, swung the door to behind himself, and bolted it, seized the zinc pig's pail that stood by the entrance to the kitchen, and had it neatly and resonantly over Uncle Jim's head, as he came belatedly in round the outhouse on the other side. One of the splintered bottles jabbed Mr. Polly's ear—at the time it seemed of no importance—and then Uncle Jim was down and writhing dangerously and noisily upon the yard tiles,

with his head still in the pig pail, and his bottle gone to splinters, and Mr. Polly was fastening the kitchen door against him.

"Can't go on like this for ever," said Mr. Polly, whooping for breath, and selecting a weapon from among the brooms that stood behind the kitchen door.

Uncle Jim was losing his head. He was up and kicking the door, and bellowing unamiable proposals and invitations, so that a strategist emerging silently by the tap door could locate him without difficulty, steal upon him unawares, and—!

But before that felling blow could be delivered, Uncle Jim's ear had caught a footfall, and he turned. Mr. Polly quailed, and lowered his broom—a fatal hesitation.

"*Now* I got you!" cried Uncle Jim, dancing forward in a disconcerting zigzag.

He rushed too close, and Mr. Polly stopped him featly, as it were a miracle, with the head of the broom across his chest. Uncle Jim seized the broom with both hands. "Lea go," he said, and tugged. Mr. Polly shook his head, tugged, and showed pale, compressed lips. Both tugged. Then Uncle Jim tried to get round the end of the broom; Mr. Polly circled away. They began to circle about one another, both lugging hard, both intensely watchful of the slightest initiative on the part of the other. Mr. Polly wished brooms were longer—twelve or thirteen feet, for example; Uncle Jim was clearly for shortness in brooms. He wasted breath in saying what was to happen shortly—sanguinary, oriental, soul-blenching things—when the broom no longer separated them. Mr. Polly thought he had never seen an uglier person. Suddenly Uncle Jim flashed into violent activity, but alcohol slows movement, and Mr. Polly was equal to him. Then Uncle Jim tried jerks, and, for a terrible instant, seemed to have the broom out of Mr. Polly's hands. But Mr. Polly recovered it with the clutch of a drowning man. Then Uncle Jim drove suddenly at Mr. Polly's midriff; but again Mr. Polly was ready, and swept him round in a circle. Then suddenly a wild hope filled Mr. Polly. He saw the river was very near, the post to which the punt was tied not three yards away. With a wild yell he sent the broom home under his antagonist's ribs. "Wooosh!" he cried, as the resistance gave.

"Oh! *Gaw!*" said Uncle Jim, going backward helplessly, and Mr. Polly thrust hard, and abandoned the broom to the enemy's despairing clutch.

Splash! Uncle Jim was in the water, and Mr. Polly had leapt like a cat aboard the ferry punt, and grasped the pole.

Up came Uncle Jim spluttering and dripping. "You (unprofitable matter, and printing it might lead to a Censorship of Novels)—You know I got a weak chess!"

The pole took him in the throat and drove him backward and downwards.

"Lea go!" cried Uncle Jim, staggering, and with real terror in his once awful eyes.

Splash! Down he fell backwards into a frothing mass of water, with Mr. Polly jabbing at him. Under water he turned round, and came up again, as if in flight towards the middle of the river. Directly his head reappeared, Mr. Polly had him between his shoulders and under again, bubbling thickly. A hand clutched and disappeared.

It was stupendous! Mr. Polly had discovered the heel of Achilles. Uncle Jim had no stomach for cold water. The broom floated away, pitching gently on the swell. Mr. Polly, infuriated by victory, thrust Uncle Jim under again, and drove the punt round on its chain, in such a manner, that when Uncle Jim came up for the fourth time—and now he was nearly out of his depth, too buoyed up to walk, and apparently nearly helpless—Mr. Polly, fortunately for them both, could not reach him.

Uncle Jim made the clumsy gestures of those who struggle insecurely in the water. "Keep out," said Mr. Polly. Uncle Jim, with a great effort, got a footing, emerged until his arm-pits were out of water, until his waistcoat buttons showed, one by one, till scarcely two remained, and made for the camp-sheeting.

"Keep out!" cried Mr. Polly, and leapt off the punt and followed the movements of his victim along the shore.

"I tell you I got a weak chess," said Uncle Jim moistly. "I ate worter. This ain't fair fightin'."

"Keep out!" said Mr. Polly.

"This ain't fair fightin'," said Uncle Jim, almost weeping, and all his terrors had gone.

"Keep out!" said Mr. Polly, with an accurately poised pole.

"I tell you I got to land, you Fool," said Uncle Jim, with a sort of despairing wrathfulness, and began moving down-stream.

"You keep out," said Mr. Polly in parallel movement. "Don't you ever land on this place again! . . ."

Slowly, argumentatively, and reluctantly, Uncle Jim waded down-

stream. He tried threats, he tried persuasion, he even tried a belated note of pathos; Mr. Polly remained inexorable, if in secret a little perplexed as to the outcome of the situation. "This cold's getting to my marrer!" said Uncle Jim.

"You want cooling. You keep out in it," said Mr. Polly.

They came round the bend into sight of Nicholson's ait, where the backwater runs down to the Potwell Mill. And there, after much parley and several feints Uncle Jim, made a desperate effort, and struggled into clutch of the overhanging osiers on the island, and so got out of the water, with the mill-stream between them. He emerged dripping and muddy and vindictive. "By *Garw!*" he said. "I'll skin you for this!"

"You keep off, or I'll do worse to you," said Mr. Polly.

The spirit was out of Uncle Jim for the time, and he turned away to struggle through the osiers towards the mill, leaving a shining trail of water among the green-grey stems.

Mr. Polly returned slowly and thoughtfully to the inn, and suddenly his mind began to bubble with phrases. The plump woman stood at the top of the steps that led up to the inn door, to greet him.

"Law!" she cried, as he drew near, "asn't 'e killed you?"

"Do I look it?" said Mr. Polly.

"But where's Jim?"

"Gone off."

"'E was mad drunk and dangerous!"

"I put him in the river," said Mr. Polly. "That toned down his alcolaceous frenzy! I gave him a bit of a doing altogether."

"Hain't he 'urt you?"

"Not a bit of it!"

"Then what's all that blood beside your ear?"

Mr. Polly felt. "Quite a cut! Funny how one overlooks things! Heated moments! He must have done that when he jabbed about with those bottles. Hallo, Kiddy! You venturing downstairs again?"

"Ain't he killed you?" asked the little girl.

"Well!"

"I wish I'd seen more of the fighting."

"Didn't you?"

"All I saw was you running round the house, and Uncle Jim after you."

There was a little pause. "I was leading him on," said Mr. Polly.

"Someone's shouting at the ferry," she said.

"Right-o. But you won't see any more of Uncle Jim for a bit. We've been having a *conversazione* about that."

"I believe it *is* Uncle Jim," said the little girl.

"Then he can wait," said Mr. Polly shortly.

He turned round and listened for the words that drifted across from the little figure on the opposite bank. So far as he could judge, Uncle Jim was making an appointment for the morrow. Mr. Polly replied with a defiant movement of the punt pole. The little figure was convulsed for a moment, and then went on its way upstream—fiercely.

So it was the first campaign ended in an insecure victory.

The next day was Wednesday, and a slack day for the Potwell Inn. It was a hot, close day, full of the murmuring of bees. One or two people crossed by the ferry; an elaborately-equipped fisherman stopped for cold meat and dry ginger ale in the bar parlour; some haymakers came and drank beer for an hour, and afterwards sent jars and jugs by a boy to be replenished; that was all. Mr. Polly had risen early, and was busy about the place meditating upon the probable tactics of Uncle Jim. He was no longer strung up to the desperate pitch of the first encounter. He was grave and anxious. Uncle Jim had shrunk, as all antagonists that are boldly faced shrink, after the first battle, to the negotiable, the vulnerable. Formidable he was, no doubt, but not invincible. He had, under Providence, been defeated once, and he might be defeated altogether.

Mr. Polly went about the place considering the militant possibilities of pacific things—pokers, copper-sticks, garden implements, kitchen knives, garden nets, barbed wire, oars, clotheslines, blankets, pewter pots, stockings, and broken bottles. He prepared a club with a stocking and a bottle inside, upon the best East End model. He swung it round his head once, broke an outhouse window with a flying fragment of glass, and ruined the stocking beyond all darning. He developed a subtle scheme, with the cellar flap as a sort of pitfall; but he rejected it finally because (*a*) it might entrap the plump woman, and (*b*) he had no use whatever for Uncle Jim in the cellar. He determined to wire the garden that evening, burglar fashion, against the possibilities of a night attack.

Towards two o'clock in the afternoon three young men arrived in a capacious boat from the direction of Lammam, and asked per-

mission to camp in the paddock. It was given all the more readily by Mr. Polly because he perceived in their proximity a possible check upon the self-expression of Uncle Jim. But he did not foresee, and no one could have foreseen, that Uncle Jim, stealing craftily upon the Potwell Inn in the late afternoon, armed with a large rough-hewn stake, would have mistaken the bending form of one of those campers—who was pulling a few onions by permission in the garden—for Mr. Polly's, and crept upon it swiftly and silently, and smitten its wide invitation unforgettably and unforgivably. It was an error impossible to explain; the resounding whack went up to heaven, the cry of amazement, and Mr. Polly emerged from the inn, armed with the frying-pan he was cleaning, to take this reckless assailant in the rear. Uncle Jim, realizing his error, fled blaspheming into the arms of the other two campers, who were returning from the village with butcher's meat and groceries. They caught him, they smacked his face with steak and punched him with a bursting parcel of lump sugar, they held him though he bit them, and their idea of punishment was to duck him. They were hilarious, strong young stockbrokers' clerks, Territorials, and seasoned boating men; they ducked him as though it was romping and all that Mr. Polly had to do was to pick up lumps of sugar for them and wipe them on his sleeve and put them on a plate, and explain that Uncle Jim was a notorious bad character, and not quite right in his head.

"Got a regular Obsession the Missis is his Aunt," said Mr. Polly, expanding it. "Perfect noosance he is."

But he caught a glance of Uncle Jim's eye as he receded before the campers' urgency that boded ill for him, and in the night he had a disagreeable idea that perhaps his luck might not hold for the third occasion.

That came soon enough. So soon, indeed, as the campers had gone.

Thursday was the early closing day at Lammam, and, next to Sunday, the busiest part of the week at the Potwell Inn. Sometimes as many as six boats all at once would be moored against the ferry punt, and hiring row-boats. People could either have a complete tea, a complete tea with jam, cake, and eggs, a kettle of boiling water and find the rest, or Refreshments *à la carte* as they chose. They sat about, but usually the boiling water-ers had a delicacy about using the tables, and grouped themselves humbly on the ground. The complete tea-ers with jam and eggs got the best tablecloth, on the table nearest the steps that led up to the glass-panelled door.

The groups about the lawn were very satisfying to Mr. Polly's sense of amenity. To the right were the complete tea-ers, with everything heart could desire; then a small group of three young men in remarkable green and violet and pale-blue shirts, and two girls in mauve and yellow blouses, with common teas and gooseberry jam, at the green clothless table; then, on the grass down by the pollard willow, a small family of hot-water-ers with a hamper, a little troubled by wasps in their jam from the nest in the tree, and all in mourning, but happy otherwise; and on the lawn to the right a ginger beer lot of 'prentices without their collars, and very jocular and happy. The young people in the rainbow shirts and blouses formed the centre of interest; they were under the leadership of a gold-spectacled senior with a fluting voice and an air of mystery; he ordered everything, and showed a peculiar knowledge of the qualities of the Potwell jams, preferring gooseberry with much insistence. Mr. Polly watched him, christened him the "benifluous influence," glanced at the 'prentices, and went inside and down into the cellar in order to replenish the stock of stone ginger beer, which the plump woman had allowed to run low during the preoccupations of the campaign. It was in the cellar that he first became aware of the return of Uncle Jim. He became aware of him as a voice, a voice not only hoarse but thick, as voices thicken under the influence of alcohol.

"Where's that muddy-faced mongrel?" cried Uncle Jim. "Let 'im come out to me! Where's that blighted whisp with the punt pole—I got a word to say to 'im. Come out of it, you pot-bellied chunk of dirtiness, you! Come out and 'ave your ugly face wiped. I got a Thing for you . . . 'Ear me?"

"E's 'iding, that's what 'e's doing," said the voice of Uncle Jim, dropping for a moment to sorrow, and then with a great increment of wrathfulness: "Come out of my nest, you blinking cuckoo, you, or I'll cut your silly insides out! Come out of it, you pockmarked Rat! Stealing another man's 'ome away from 'im! Come out and look me in the face, you squinting son of a Skunk! . . ."

Mr. Polly took the ginger beer and went thoughtfully upstairs to the bar.

"E's back," said the plump woman as he appeared. "I knew 'e'd come back."

"I heard him," said Mr. Polly, and looked about. "Just gimme the old poker handle that's under the beer-engine."

The door opened softly, and Mr. Polly turned quickly. But it

was only the pointed nose and intelligent face of the young man with the gilt spectacles and the discreet manner. He coughed, and the spectacles fixed Mr. Polly.

"I say," he said with quiet earnestness, "there's a chap out here seems to *want* someone."

"Why don't he come in?" said Mr. Polly.

"He seems to want you out there."

"What's he want?"

"*I think*," said the spectacled young man, after a thoughtful moment, "he appears to have brought you a present of fish."

"Isn't he shouting?"

"He *is* a little boisterous."

"He'd better come in."

The manner of the spectacled young man intensified. "I wish you'd come out and persuade him to go away," he said. "His language—*isn't* quite the thing—ladies."

"It never was," said the plump woman, her voice charged with sorrow.

Mr. Polly moved towards the door and stood with his hand on the handle. The gold-spectacled face disappeared.

"Now, my man," came his voice from outside, "be careful what you're saying——"

"Oo in all the World and Hereafter are you to call me me man?" cried Uncle Jim, in the voice of one astonished and pained beyond endurance, and added scornfully, "You gold-eyed Geezer, you!"

"Tut, tut!" said the gentleman in gilt glasses. "Restrain yourself!"

Mr. Polly emerged, poker in hand, just in time to see what followed. Uncle Jim in his shirt-sleeves, and a state of ferocious décolletage, was holding something—yes!—a dead eel by means of a piece of newspaper about its tail, holding it down and back and a little sideways, in such a way as to smite with it upward and hard. It struck the spectacled gentleman under the jaw with a peculiar dead thud, and a cry of horror came from the two seated parties at the sight. One of the girls shrieked piercingly, "Horace!" and every one sprang up. The sense of helping numbers came to Mr. Polly's aid.

"Drop it!" he cried, and came down the steps waving his poker and thrusting the spectacled gentleman before him, as heretofore great heroes were wont to wield the ox-hide shield.

Uncle Jim gave ground suddenly, and trod upon the foot of a young man in a blue shirt, who immediately thrust at him violently with both hands.

"Lea go!" howled Uncle Jim. "That's the Chap I'm looking for!" and pressing the head of the spectacled gentleman aside, smote hard at Mr. Polly.

But at the sight of this indignity inflicted upon the spectacled gentleman a woman's heart was stirred, a pink parasol drove hard and true at Uncle Jim's wiry neck, and at the same moment the young man in the blue shirt sought to collar him, and lost his grip again.

"Suffragettes!" gasped Uncle Jim, with the ferrule at his throat. "Everywhere!" and aimed a second more successful blow at Mr. Polly.

"Wup!" said Mr. Polly.

But now the jam and egg party was joining in the fray. A stout, yet still fairly able-bodied gentleman in white and black checks inquired: "What's the fellow up to? Ain't there no police here?" And it was evident that once more public opinion was rallying to the support of Mr. Polly.

"Oh, come on then, all the LOT of you!" cried Uncle Jim, and backing dexterously, whirled the eel round in a destructive circle. The pink sunshade was torn from the hand that gripped it, and whirled athwart the complete but unadorned tea-things on the green table.

"Collar him! Someone get hold of his collar!" cried the gold-spectacled gentleman, retreating up the steps to the inn door as if to rally his forces.

"Stand clear, you blessed mantel ornaments!" cried Uncle Jim. "Stand clear!" and retired backing, staving off attack by means of the whirling eel.

Mr. Polly, undeterred by a sense of grave damage done to his nose, pressed the attack in front, the two young men in violet and blue skirmished on Uncle Jim's flanks, the man in white and black checks sought still further outflanking possibilities, and two of the apprentice boys ran for oars. The gold-spectacled gentleman, as if inspired, came down the wooden steps again, seized the tablecloth of the jam and egg party, lugged it from under the crockery with inadequate precautions against breakage, and advanced with compressed lips, curious lateral crouching movements, swift flashings of his glasses, and a general suggestion of bull-fighting in his pose and gestures. Uncle Jim was kept busy, and unable to plan his retreat with any strategic soundness. He was, moreover, manifestly a little nervous about the river in his rear. He gave ground in a curve, and so came right across the rapidly abandoned camp of the family in mourning, crunching teacups under his heel, oversetting the teapot, and finally tripping back-

wards over the hamper. The eel flew out at a tangent from his hand, and became a mere looping relic on the sward.

"Hold him!" cried the gentleman in spectacles. "Collar him!" and, moving forward with extraordinary promptitude, wrapped the best tablecloth about Uncle Jim's arms and head. Mr. Polly grasped his purpose instantly, the man in checks was scarcely slower, and in another moment Uncle Jim was no more than a bundle of smothered blasphemy, and a pair of wildly active legs.

"Duck him!" panted Mr. Polly, holding on to the earthquake. "Bes' thing—duck him."

The bundle was convulsed by paroxysms of anger and protest. One boot got the hamper and sent it ten yards.

"Go in the house for a clothesline, someone," said the gentleman in gold spectacles. "He'll get out of this in a moment."

One of the apprentices ran.

"Bird-nets in the garden," shouted Mr. Polly. "In the garden."

The apprentice was divided in his purpose.

And then suddenly Uncle Jim collapsed, and became a limp, dead-seeming thing under their hands. His arms were drawn inward, his legs bent up under his person, and so he lay.

"Fainted!" said the man in checks, relaxing his grip.

"A fit, perhaps," said the man in spectacles.

"Keep hold!" said Mr. Polly, too late.

For suddenly Uncle Jim's arms and legs flew out like springs released. Mr. Polly was tumbled backwards, and fell over the broken teapot, and into the arms of the father in mourning. Something struck his head—dazingly. In another second Uncle Jim was on his feet, and the tablecloth enshrouded the head of the man in checks. Uncle Jim manifestly considered he had done all that honour required of him; and against overwhelming numbers, and the possibility of reiterated duckings, flight is no disgrace.

Uncle Jim fled.

Mr. Polly sat up, after an interval of indeterminate length, among the ruins of an idyllic afternoon. Quite a lot of things seemed scattered and broken, but it was difficult to grasp it all at once. He stared between the legs of people. He became aware of a voice speaking slowly and complainingly.

"Someone ought to pay for those tea-things," said the father in mourning. "We didn't bring them 'ere to be danced on, not by no manner of means."

V

MEN IN BUCKRAM

1

FALSTAFF AND HIS GALLANTRY

(FROM "KING HENRY IV")

No veteran boasting of his scars ever pitched the tale to a gaping audience better than old Jack Falstaff, as he sits at ease in the Boar's Head in Eastcheap—though the tale is false and his hearers know it, and perhaps he knows that they know.

FALSTAFF. Give me a cup of sack: I am a rogue if I drunk to-day.

PRINCE. O villain! thy lips are scarce wiped since thou drunkest last.

FALSTAFF. All's one for that. (*He drinks.*) A plague of all cowards, still say I.

PRINCE. What's the matter?

FALSTAFF. What's the matter! there be four of us here have ta'en a thousand pound this day morning.

PRINCE. Where is it, Jack? Where is it?

FALSTAFF. Where is it! taken from us it is: a hundred upon poor four of us.

PRINCE. What! a hundred, man?

FALSTAFF. I am a rogue, if I were not at half-sword with a dozen of them two hours together. I have 'scaped by miracle. I am eight times thrust through the doublet, four through the hose; my buckler cut through and through, my sword hacked like a hand-saw: *ecce signum!* I never dealt better since I was a man; all would not do. A plague of all cowards! Let them speak: if they speak more or less than truth, they are villains and the sons of darkness.

PRINCE. Speak, Sirs; how was it?

GADSHILL. We four set upon some dozen,—

FALSTAFF. Sixteen, at least, my lord.

GADSHILL. And bound them.

PETO. No, no, they were not bound.

FALSTAFF. You rogue, they were bound, every man of them; or I am a Jew else, an Ebrew Jew.

GADSHILL. As we were sharing, some six or seven fresh men set upon us,—

FALSTAFF. And unbound the rest, and then come in the other.

PRINCE. What! fought you with them all?

FALSTAFF. All! I know not what you call all; but if I fought not with fifty of them, I am a bunch of radish. If there were not two or three and fifty upon poor old Jack, then am I no two-legged creature.

PRINCE. Pray God you have not murdered some of them.

FALSTAFF. Nay, that's past praying for: I have peppered two of them: two I am sure I have paid, two rogues in buckram suits. I tell thee what, Hal, if I tell thee a lie, spit in my face, call me horse. Thou knowest my old ward; here I lay, and thus I bore my point. Four rogues in buckram let drive at me,—

PRINCE. What! four? thou saidst but two even now.

FALSTAFF. Four, Hal; I told thee four.

POINS. Ay, ay, he said four.

FALSTAFF. These four came all a-front, and mainly thrust at me. I made me no more ado but took all their seven points in my target, thus.

PRINCE. Seven? why, there were but four even now.

FALSTAFF. In buckram?

POINS. Ay, four, in buckram suits.

FALSTAFF. Seven, by these hilts, or I am a villain else.

PRINCE. Prithee, let him alone; we shall have more anon.

FALSTAFF. Dost thou hear me, Hal?

PRINCE. Ay, and mark thee too, Jack.

FALSTAFF. Do so, for it is worth the listening to. These nine in buckram that I told thee of,—

PRINCE. So, two more already.

FALSTAFF. Their points being broken,—

POINS. Down fell their hose.

FALSTAFF. Began to give me ground; but I followed me close, came in foot and hand, and with a thought seven of the eleven I paid.

PRINCE. O monstrous! eleven buckram men grown out of two.

FALSTAFF. But, as the devil would have it, three misbegotten knaves in Kendal Green came at my back and let drive at me; for it was so dark, Hal, that thou could'st not see thy hand.

PRINCE. These lies are like their father that begets them; gross

as a mountain, open, palpable. Why, thou clay-brained guts, thou knotty-pated fool, thou whoreson, obscene, greasy, tallow-catch,—

FALSTAFF. What! art thou mad? art thou mad? is not the truth the truth?

PRINCE. Why, how could'st thou know these men in Kendal Green, when it was so dark thou could'st not see thy hand? come, tell us your reason: what sayest thou to this?

POINS. Come, your reason, Jack, your reason.

FALSTAFF. What! upon compulsion? 'Zounds! an I were at the strappado or all the racks in the world I would not tell you on compulsion. Give you a reason on compulsion! if reasons were as plenty as blackberries, I would give no man a reason upon compulsion, I.

PRINCE. I'll be no longer guilty of this sin; this sanguine coward, this bed-presser, this horse-backbreaker, this huge hill of flesh;—

FALSTAFF. 'S blood, you starveling, you elf-skin, you dried neat's-tongue, you bull's-pizzle, you stock-fish! O! for breath to utter what is like thee; you tailor's-yard, you sheath, you bow-case, you vile standing tuck;—

PRINCE. Well, breathe awhile, and then to it again; and when thou hast tired thyself in base comparisons, hear me speak but this.

POINS. Mark, Jack.

PRINCE. We two saw you four set on four and bound them, and were masters of their wealth. Mark now, how a plain tale shall put you down. Then did we two set on you four, and, with a word, out-faced you from your prize, and have it; yea, and can show it you here in the house. And, Falstaff, you carried your guts away as nimbly, with as quick dexterity, and roared for mercy, and still ran and roared, as ever I heard bull-calf. What a slave art thou, to hack thy sword as thou hast done, and then say it was in fight! What trick, what device, what starting-hole canst thou now find out to hide thee from this open and apparent shame?

POINS. Come, let's hear, Jack; what trick hast thou now.

FALSTAFF. By the Lord, I knew ye as well as he that made ye. Why, hear you, my masters: was it for me to kill the heir apparent? should I turn upon the true prince? why, thou knowest I am as valiant as Hercules; but beware instinct: the lion will not touch the true prince. Instinct is a great matter, I was a coward on instinct. I shall think the better of myself and thee during my life; I for a valiant lion, and thou for a true prince. But, by the Lord, lads, I am glad you have the money. Hostess, clap to the doors: watch to-night, pray to-morrow. Gallants,

lads, boys, hearts of gold, all the titles of good fellowship come to you!
What! shall we be merry? shall we have a play extempore?

PRINCE. Content; and the argument shall be thy running away.

FALSTAFF. Ah! no more of that, Hal, an thou lovest me.

DON QUIXOTE AT THE INN

Don Quixote and Sancho Panza have put up at an inn, the gallant Don having just captured Mambrino's helmet—though the local barber insisted that it was really his shaving basin. More confused than ever, and imagining the inn to be an enchanted castle, Don Quixote maintains through thick and thin his belief in what he has seized.

"GENTLEMEN," said the barber, "pray favour me with your opinion concerning what is affirmed by these gentlefolks, who so obstinately maintain that this is not a bason, but a helmet?"

"And if any one affirms to the contrary," replied Don Quixote, "I will make him sensible that he lies, if he be a knight, and if a plebeian, that he lies a thousand times."

His own townsman, who was present all the while, being well acquainted with the knight's humour, resolved to encourage him in his extravagance, and carry on the joke for the diversion of the company: with this view he addressed himself to the other shaver, saying, "Mr. Barber, or whosoever you are, you must know that I am of the same profession; I have had a certificate of my examination these twenty years; and know very well all the instruments of the art, without one exception. I was, moreover, a soldier in my youth, consequently can distinguish an helmet, and morrion, and a casque with its beaver, together with everything relating to military affairs; I mean, the different kinds of armour worn by soldiers in the field. I say, under correction, and still with submission to better judgment, that the object now in dispute, which that worthy gentleman holds in his hand, is not only no barber's bason, but also, as far from being one as black is from white, or falsehood from truth. I likewise aver, that though it is a helmet, it is not entire."

"You are certainly in the right," said Don Quixote, "for it wants one half, which is the beaver."

The curate, who by this time understood the intention of his friend, seconded the asseveration, which was also confirmed by Cardenio, Don Fernando, and his companions. The judge himself would have

borne a part in the jest had he not been engrossed by the affair of Don Lewis; but that earnest business kept him in such perplexity of thought that he could give little or no attention to the joke that was going forward.

"Good God!" cried the barber, with amazement. "Is it possible that so many honourable persons should pronounce this bason to be a helmet? An assertion sufficient to astonish a whole university, let it be never so learned! Well, if that bason be a helmet, I suppose the saddlecloth must be a horse's trappings too, as this gentleman says."

"To me it seems a saddlecloth," replied the knight; "but, as I have already observed, I will not pretend to decide whether it be the housing of an ass, or the furniture of a steed."

"Don Quixote has no more to do but speak his opinion," said the curate. "In affairs of chivalry, all these gentlemen, myself, and even the ladies, yield to his superior understanding——"

"By Heaven! gentlemen," cried the knight, "so many strange accidents have happened to me, the twice that I have lodged in this castle, that I will not venture positively to affirm the truth of anything that may be asked relating to it; for I imagine that everything in this place is conducted by the power of enchantment. The first time I passed the night in this place, I was harassed extremely by an enchanted Moor that resides in the castle, while Sancho was almost as roughly handled by some of his attendants. And this very night I was suspended by one arm for the space of two hours, without knowing how or wherefore I incurred that misfortune. For me, therefore, to give my opinion in a case of such perplexity, would be a rash decision: with regard to the helmet, which they say is a bason, I have already expressed my sentiments; but dare not give a definitive sentence by declaring whether that be a saddlecloth or a horse's furniture. That I leave to the judgment of the good company who, not being knights, as I am, perhaps are not subjected to the enchantments of this place—but, enjoying their faculties clear and undisturbed, can judge of these things as they really and truly are, not as they appear to my imagination."

"Doubtless," replied Don Fernando, "Señor Don Quixote manifests his own prudence, in observing that to us belongs the determination of this affair, which, that it may be the better doubted, I will in private take the opinions of this good company one by one, and then openly declare the full result of my inquiry."

To those who were acquainted with the knight's humour, this proposal afforded matter of infinite diversion; but the rest, being ignorant

of the joke, looked upon it as a piece of downright madness. This was particularly the opinion of the domestics belonging to Don Lewis, which was even espoused by himself and three travellers just arrived, who seemed to be troopers of the Holy Brotherhood, as indeed they were. But he that almost ran distracted was the barber, whose bason was, even in his own sight, transformed into Mambrino's helmet, while he expected every moment that his cloth would be certainly declared the rich trappings and furniture of a horse. Everybody laughed to see Don Fernando going about with great gravity collecting opinions in whispers, that each might privately declare whether that jewel, about which there had been such obstinate disputes, was the housing of an ass, or the furniture of a steed.

Having received the answers of all those who knew Don Quixote, he pronounced aloud, "Truly, honest friend, I am quite tired with asking so many opinions; for every one to whom I put the question, affirms it is downright distraction to call this a saddlecloth, which is certainly the furniture of a horse, and that too of an excellent breed. Therefore, you must e'en have patience; for in spite of you, and the testimony of your ass to boot, an horse's furniture it must remain, as you have failed so egregiously in the proof of what you allege."

"May I never taste the joys of Heaven," cried the transported barber, "if you are not all deceived; and so may my soul appear before God, as this appears to me a mere blanket, and not the furniture of a horse! But thus might overcome—I say no more—neither am I drunk, being fresh and fasting from everything but sin."

The company laughed as heartily at the simplicity of the barber as the extravagance of the knight, who, upon this decision, said, "Nothing now remains, but that every one should take his own again; and may St. Peter bless what God bestows."

One of the four servants belonging to Don Lewis now interposed, saying, "If this be not a premeditated joke, I cannot persuade myself that people of sound understanding, such as all this company are or seem to be, should venture to say and affirm that this is no bason, nor that a saddlecloth; yet, seeing this is both said and affirmed, I conceive there must be some mystery in this insisting upon a thing so contrary to truth and experience; for my God!" (an oath he swore with great emphasis) "all the people on earth shall never make me believe that this is not a barber's bason, or that not the housing of an he-ass."

"Why not of a she-ass?" said the curate.

"That distinction makes no difference," said the servant; "nor has

it any concern with the dispute, which is occasioned by your saying that it is not a cloth at all."

At the same time, one of the troopers who had entered and been witness to the quarrel and question, could no longer contain his choler and displeasure at what he heard; and therefore said, in a furious tone, "If that is not a cloth, my father never begat me; and he that says, or shall say, the contrary, must be drunk."

"You lie, like an infamous scoundrel!" replied Don Quixote; who, lifting up his lance, which he still kept in his hand, aimed such a stroke at the trooper's skull that if he had not been very expeditious in shifting it, he would have been stretched at full length upon the ground, upon which the weapon was shivered to pieces. The rest of the troop, seeing their companion so roughly handled, raised their voices, crying for help to the Holy Brotherhood. The innkeeper, being of that fraternity, ran in for his tipstaff and sword, and espoused the cause of his brethren; the domestics surrounded Don Lewis, that he might not escape in the scuffle; the barber, seeing the house turned topsy-turvy, laid hold again of the cloth, which was at the same time seized by Sancho.

Don Quixote attacked the troopers sword-in-hand; Don Lewis called to his servants to leave him, and go to the assistance of Cardenio and Don Fernando, who had ranged themselves on the side of Don Quixote; the curate exhorted, the landlady screamed, the daughter wept, Maritornes blubbered, Dorothea was confounded, Lucinda perplexed, and Donna Clara fainted away. The barber pummelled Sancho, who returned the compliment; one of the servants presuming to seize Don Lewis by the arm, that he might not run away, the young gentleman gave him such a slap in the face as bathed all his teeth in blood—the judge exerted himself in his defence. Don Fernando having brought one of the troopers to the ground, kicked his whole carcase to his heart's content: the landlord raised his voice again, roaring for help to the Holy Brotherhood; so that the whole inn was a scene of lamentation, cries, shrieks, confusion, dread, dismay, disaster, back-strokes, cudgellings, kicks, cuffs, and effusion of blood.

In the midst of this labyrinth, chaos, and mischief, Don Quixote's imagination suggested that he was all of a sudden involved in the confusion of Agramonte's camp, and therefore pronounced with a voice that made the whole inn resound, "Let every man forbear, put up his sword, be quiet and listen, unless he be weary of his life."

On hearing this exclamation, all the combatants paused, while he proceeded thus: "Did not I tell you, gentlemen, that this castle was

enchanted, and doubtless inhabited by a whole legion of devils? As a proof of which you may now perceive with your own eyes how the discord and mutiny in Agramonte's camp is translated hither. Behold, in one place we fight for a sword; in another, for a horse; in a third, for an eagle; and in a fourth, for a helmet; in short we are all by the ears together, for we know not what. Advance, therefore, my lord Judge, and Mr. Curate, and in the persons of Agramonte and King Sobrino, re-establish peace among us; for, by Almighty God! it were wicked and absurd that persons of our importance should be slain in such a frivolous cause."

The troopers, who did not understand the knight's style, and found themselves very severely treated by Don Fernando, Cardenio, and their companions, would not be pacified; but it was otherwise with the barber, who, in the scuffle, had lost both his cloth and beard. Sancho, who, like a faithful servant, minded the least hint of his master, willingly obeyed; and the servants of Don Lewis were fain to be quiet, seeing how little they had got by concerning themselves in the fray. The inn-keeper alone insisted upon their chastising the insolence of that madman, who was every moment throwing the whole house into confusion; at length the disturbance was appeased—the cloth remained as an horse's furniture till the day of judgment, the bason as an helmet, and the inn as a castle, in Don Quixote's imagination.

3

BOB ACRES MISLAYS HIS COURAGE

(FROM "THE RIVALS," BY SHERIDAN)

Bob Acres, his courage oozing at every pore, has come to fight the duel to which he so rashly challenged the mysterious Mr. Beverley. Bob's second, the hare-brained Sir Lucius O'Trigger, has accompanied him to the field of action.

ACT V

SCENE III — *King's-Mead-Fields.*

Enter SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER and ACRES, with pistols.

ACRES. By my valour! then, Sir Lucius, forty yards is a good distance. Odds levels and aims!—I say it is a good distance.

SIR LUC. Is it for muskets or small field-pieces? Upon my conscience, Mr. Acres, you must leave those things to me.—Stay now—I'll show you.—[*Measures paces along the stage.*] There now, that is a very pretty distance—a pretty gentleman's distance.

ACRES. Zounds! we might as well fight in a sentry-box! I tell you, Sir Lucius, the farther he is off, the cooler I shall take my aim.

SIR LUC. Faith! then I suppose you would aim at him best of all if he was out of sight!

ACRES. No, Sir Lucius; but I should think forty or eight and thirty yards——

SIR LUC. Pho! pho! nonsense! three or four feet between the mouths of your pistols is as good as a mile.

ACRES. Odds bullets, no!—by my valour! there is no merit in killing him so near; do, my dear Sir Lucius, let me bring him down at a long shot—a long shot, Sir Lucius, if you love me.

SIR LUC. Well, the gentleman's friend and I must settle that.—But tell me now, Mr. Acres, in case of an accident, is there any little will or commission I could execute for you?

ACRES. I am much obliged to you, Sir Lucius, but I don't understand——

SIR LUC. Why, you may think there's no being shot at without a little risk—and if an unlucky bullet should carry a quietus with it—I say it will be no time then to be bothering you about family matters.

ACRES. A quietus!

SIR LUC. For instance, now—if that should be the case—would you choose to be pickled and sent home?—or would it be the same to you to lie here in the Abbey? I'm told there is very snug lying in the Abbey.

ACRES. Pickled!—Snug lying in the Abbey!—Odds tremors! Sir Lucius, don't talk so!

SIR LUC. I suppose, Mr. Acres, you never were engaged in an affair of this kind before?

ACRES. No, Sir Lucius, never before.

SIR LUC. Ah! that's a pity!—there's nothing like being used to a thing. Pray now, how would you receive the gentleman's shot?

ACRES. Odds files!—I've practised that—there, Sir Lucius—there. [*Puts himself in an attitude.*] A side-front, hey? Odd! I'll make myself small enough? I'll stand edgeways.

SIR LUC. Now—you're quite out—for if you stand so when I take my aim—— [*Levelling at him.*]

ACRES. Zounds! Sir Lucius—are you sure it is not cocked?

SIR LUC. Never fear.

ACRES. But—but—you don't know—it may go off of its own head!

SIR LUC. Pho! be easy.—Well, now if I hit you in the body, my bullet has a double chance—for if it misses a vital part of your right side, 'twill be very hard if it don't succeed on the left!

ACRES. A vital part.

SIR LUC. But, there—fix yourself so—[*Placing him*]—let him see the broad-side of your full front—there—now a ball or two may pass clean through your body, and never do any harm at all.

ACRES. Clean through me!—a ball or two clean through me!

SIR LUC. Ay—may they—and it is much the genteelst attitude into the bargain.

ACRES. Look'ee! Sir Lucius—I'd just as lieve be shot in an awkward posture as a genteel one; so, by my valour! I will stand edgeways.

SIR LUC. [*Looking at his watch.*] Sure they don't mean to disappoint us—Hah!—no, faith—I think I see them coming.

ACRES. Hey!—what!—coming!—

SIR LUC. Ay.—Who are those yonder getting over the stile?

ACRES. There are two of them indeed!—well—let them come—hey, Sir Lucius!—we—we—we—we—won't run.

SIR LUC. Run!

ACRES. No—I say—we won't run, by my valour!

SIR LUC. What the devil's the matter with you?

ACRES. Nothing—nothing—my dear friend—my dear Sir Lucius—but I—I—I don't feel quite so bold, somehow, as I did.

SIR LUC. O fy!—consider your honour.

ACRES. Ay—true—my honour. Do, Sir Lucius, edge in a word or two every now and then about my honour.

SIR LUC. Well, here they're coming. [*Looking.*]

ACRES. Sir Lucius—if I wa'n't with you, I should almost think I was afraid.—If my valour should leave me! Valour will come and go.

SIR LUC. Then pray keep it fast, while you have it.

ACRES. Sir Lucius—I doubt it is going—yes—my valour is certainly going!—it is sneaking off!—I feel it oozing out as it were at the palms of my hands!

SIR LUC. Your honour—your honour.—Here they are.

ACRES. O mercy!—now—that I was safe at Clod Hall! or could be shot before I was aware!

Enter FAULKLAND and CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.

SIR LUC. Gentlemen, your most obedient.—Hah!—what, Captain Absolute!—So, I suppose, sir, you are come here, just like myself—to do a kind office, first for your friend—then to proceed to business on your own account.

ACRES. What, Jack!—my dear Jack!—my dear friend!

ABS. Hark'ee, Bob, Beverley's at hand.

SIR LUC. Well, Mr. Acres—I don't blame your saluting the gentleman civilly.—[*To FAULKLAND.*] So, Mr. Beverley, if you'll choose your weapons, the captain and I will measure the ground.

FAULK. My weapons, sir!

ACRES. Odds life! Sir Lucius, I'm not going to fight Mr. Faulkland; these are my particular friends.

SIR LUC. What, sir, did you not come here to fight Mr. Acres?

FAULK. Not I, upon my word, sir.

SIR LUC. Well, now, that's mighty provoking! But I hope, Mr. Faulkland, as there are three of us come on purpose for the game, you won't be so cantankerous as to spoil the party by sitting out.

ABS. O pray, Faulkland, fight to oblige Sir Lucius.

FAULK. Nay, if Mr. Acres is so bent on the matter——

ACRES. No, no, Mr. Faulkland;—I'll bear my disappointment like a Christian.—Look'ee, Sir Lucius, there's no occasion at all for me to fight; and if it is the same to you, I'd as lieve let it alone.

SIR LUC. Observe me, Mr. Acres—I must not be trifled with. You have certainly challenged somebody—and you came here to fight him. Now, if that gentleman is willing to represent him—I can't see, for my soul, why it isn't just the same thing.

ACRES. Why no—Sir Lucius—I tell you, 'tis one Beverley I've challenged—a fellow, you see, that dare not show his face!—if he were here, I'd make him give up his pretensions directly!

ABS. Hold, Bob—let me set you right—there is no such man as Beverley in the case.—The person who assumed that name is before you; and as his pretensions are the same in both characters, he is ready to support them in whatever way you please.

SIR LUC. Well, this is lucky—Now you have an opportunity——

ACRES. What, quarrel with my dear friend, Jack Absolute?—not if he were fifty Beverleys! Zounds! Sir Lucius, you would not have me so unnatural.

SIR LUC. Upon my conscience, Mr. Acres, your valour has oozed away with a vengeance!

ACRES. Not in the least! Odds backs and abettors! I'll be your second with all my heart—and if you should get a quietus, you may command me entirely. I'll get you snug lying in the Abbey here; or pickle you, and send you over to Blunderbuss-hall, or anything of the kind, with the greatest pleasure.

SIR LUC. Pho! pho! you are little better than a coward.

ACRES. Mind, gentlemen, he calls me a coward; coward as the word, by my valour!

SIR LUC. Well, sir?

ACRES. Look'ee, Sir Lucius, 't isn't that I mind the word coward—coward may be said in joke.—But if you had called me a poltroon, odds daggers and balls——

SIR LUC. Well, sir?

ACRES. I should have thought you a very ill-bred man.

SIR LUC. Pho! you are beneath my notice.

ABS. Nay, Sir Lucius, you can't have a better second than my friend Acres—He is a most determined dog—called in the country, Fighting Bob.—He generally kills a man a week—don't you, Bob?

ACRES. Ay—at home!

A THREE-CORNERED CONTEST

(FROM CAPTAIN MARRYAT'S "MIDSHIPMAN EASY")

Jack Easy was the only son of a gentleman of considerable wealth and radical opinions. The boy entered the Navy as a midshipman, and his ideas, inherited from his father, concerning the "rights of man," caused him to indulge in arguments with his superiors such as had seldom before been heard in the Service. In times of peril and adventure, he was always anxious to "argue the point," but that he was fearless also, and resourceful, is proved by the narrative of his duel with the boatswain and the purser's steward.

BUT at Malta Jack got into another scrape. Although Mr. Smallsole could not injure him, he was still Jack's enemy; the more so as Jack had become very popular. Vigors also submitted, planning revenge; but the parties in this instance were the boatswain and purser's steward. Jack still continued his fore-castle conversations with Mesty; and the boatswain and purser's steward, probably from their respective ill-will towards our hero, had become great allies. Mr. Easthupp now put on his best jacket to walk the dog-watches with Mr. Biggs, and they took every opportunity to talk at our hero.

"It's my peculiar hopinion," said Mr. Easthupp, one evening, pulling at the frill of his shirt, "that a gentleman should behave as a gentleman, and that if a gentleman professes opinions of hequality and such liberal sentiments, that he is bound as a gentleman to hact up to them."

"Very true, Mr. Easthupp; he is bound to act up to them; and not because a person, who was a gentleman as well as himself, happens not to be on the quarter-deck, to insult him because he only has perfessed opinions like his own."

Hereupon Mr. Biggs struck his rattan against the funnel, and looked at our hero.

"Yes," continued the purser's steward, "I should like to see the fellow who would have done so on shore; however, the time will come

when I can hagain pull on my plain coat, and then the insult shall be washed out in blood, Mr. Biggs."

"And I'll be cursed if I don't some day teach a lesson to the black-guard who stole my trousers."

"Vas hall your money right, Mr. Biggs?" inquired the purser's steward.

"I didn't count," replied the boatswain magnificently.

"No—gentlemen are above that," replied Easthupp; "but there are many light-fingered gentry about. The quantity of vatches and harticles of value vish were lost ven I valked Bond Street in former times is incredible."

"I can say this, at all events," replied the boatswain, "that I should be always ready to give satisfaction to any person beneath me in rank, after I had insulted him. I don't stand upon my rank, although I don't talk about equality, damme—no, nor consort with niggers."

All this was too plain for our hero not to understand; so Jack walked up to the boatswain, and taking his hat off, with the utmost politeness, said to him—

"If I mistake not, Mr. Biggs, your conversation refers to me."

"Very likely it does," replied the boatswain. "Listeners hear no good of themselves."

"It appears that gentlemen can't converse without being vatched," continued Mr. Easthupp, pulling up his shirt collar.

"It is not the first time that you have thought proper to make very offensive remarks, Mr. Biggs; and as you appear to consider yourself ill-treated in the affair of the trousers—for I tell you at once that it was I who brought them on board—I can only say," continued our hero, with a very polite bow, "that I shall be most happy to give you satisfaction."

"I am your superior officer, Mr. Easy," replied the boatswain.

"Yes, by the rules of the service; but you just now asserted that you would waive your rank—indeed, I dispute it on this occasion; I am on the quarter-deck, and you are not."

"This is the gentleman whom you have insulted, Mr. Easy," replied the boatswain, pointing to the purser's steward.

"Yes, Mr. Heasy, quite as good a gentleman as yourself, although I 'ave 'ad misfortunes—I ham of as old a family as hany in the country," replied Mr. Easthupp, now backed by the boatswain; "many the year did I valk Bond Street, and I 'ave as good blood in my weins as you,

Mr. Heasy, halthough I have been misfortunate—I've had hadmirals in my family."

"You have grossly insulted this gentleman," said Mr. Biggs, in continuation; "and notwithstanding all your talk of equality, you are afraid to give him satisfaction—you shelter yourself under your quarter-deck."

"Mr. Biggs," replied our hero, who was now very wroth, "I shall go on shore directly we arrive at Malta. Let you and this fellow put on plain clothes, and I will meet you both—and then I'll show you whether I am afraid to give satisfaction."

"One at a time," said the boatswain.

"No, sir, not one at a time, but both at the same time—I will fight both or none. If you are my superior officer, you must descend," replied Jack, with an ironical sneer, "to meet me, or I will not descend to meet that fellow, whom I believe to have been little better than a pickpocket."

This accidental hit of Jack's made the purser's steward turn pale as a sheet, and then equally red. He raved and foamed amazingly, although he could not meet Jack's indignant look, who then turned round again.

"Now, Mr. Biggs, is this to be understood, or do you shelter yourself under your forecandle?"

"I'm no dodger," replied the boatswain, "and we will settle the affair at Malta."

At which reply Jack returned to Mesty.

"Massa Easy, I look at um face, dat fello, Eastop, he no like it. I go shore wid you, see fair play, anyhow—suppose I can?"

Mr. Biggs having declared that he would fight, of course had to look out for a second, and he fixed upon Mr. Tallboys, the gunner, and requested him to be his friend. Mr. Tallboys, who had been latterly very much annoyed by Jack's victories over him in the science of navigation, and therefore felt ill-will towards him, consented; but he was very much puzzled how to arrange that three were to fight at the same time, for he had no idea of there being two duels, so he went to his cabin and commenced reading. Jack, on the other hand, dared not say a word to Jolliffe on the subject; indeed there was no one in the ship to whom he could confide but Gascoigne. He therefore went to him, and although Gascoigne thought it was excessively *infra dig.* of Jack to meet even the boatswain, as the challenge had been given there was no retracting; he therefore consented, like all midshipmen, anticipating fun, and quite thoughtless of the consequences.

The second day after they had been anchored in Valetta harbour, the boatswain and gunner, Jack and Gascoigne, obtained permission to go on shore. Mr. Easthupp, the purser's steward, dressed in his best blue coat, with brass buttons and velvet collar, the very one in which he had been taken up when he had been vowing and protesting that he was a gentleman, at the very time that his hand was abstracting a pocket-book, went up on the quarter-deck and requested the same indulgence; but Mr. Sawbridge refused, as he required him to return staves and hoops at the cooperage. Mesty also, much to his mortification, was not to be spared.

This was awkward, but it was got over by proposing that the meeting should take place behind the cooperage at a certain hour, on which Mr. Easthupp might slip out, and borrow a portion of the time appropriated to his duty, to heal the breach in his wounded honour. So the parties all went on shore, and put up at one of the small inns to make the necessary arrangements.

Mr. Tallboys then addressed Mr. Gascoigne, taking him apart, while the boatswain amused himself with a glass of grog, and our hero sat outside teasing a monkey.

"Mr. Gascoigne," said the gunner, "I have been very much puzzled how this duel should be fought, but I have at last found it out. You see that there are three parties to fight. Had there been two or four there would have been no difficulty as the right line or square might guide us in that instance; but we must arrange it upon the triangle in this."

Gascoigne stared; he could not imagine what was coming.

"Are you aware, Mr. Gascoigne, of the properties of an equilateral triangle?"

"Yes," replied the midshipman, "that it has three equal sides—but what the devil has that to do with the duel?"

"Everything, Mr. Gascoigne," replied the gunner; "it has resolved the great difficulty; indeed, the duel between three can only be fought upon that principle. You observe," said the gunner, taking a piece of chalk out of his pocket, and making a triangle on the table, "in this figure we have three points, each equidistant from each other; and we have three combatants—so that, placing one at each point, it is all fair play for the three. Mr. Easy, for instance, stands here, the boatswain here, and the purser's steward at the third corner. Now, if the distance is fairly measured, it will be all right."

"But, then," replied Gascoigne, delighted at the idea, "how are they to fire?"

"It certainly is not of much consequence," replied the gunner, "but still, as sailors, it appears to me that they should fire with the sun; that is, Mr. Easy fires at Mr. Biggs, Mr. Biggs fires at Mr. Easthupp, and Mr. Easthupp fires at Mr. Easy; so that you perceive that each party has his shot at one, and at the same time receives the fire of another."

Gascoigne was in ecstasies at the novelty of the proceeding, the more so as he perceived that Easy obtained every advantage by the arrangement.

"Upon my word, Mr. Tallboys, I give you great credit; you have a profound mathematical head, and I am delighted with your arrangement. Of course, in these affairs, the principals are bound to comply with the arrangements of the seconds, and I shall insist upon Mr. Easy consenting to your excellent and scientific proposal."

Gascoigne went out, and pulling Jack away from the monkey, told him what the gunner had proposed, at which Jack laughed heartily.

The gunner also explained it to the boatswain, who did not very well comprehend, but replied—

"I dare say it's all right—shot for shot, and d—n all favours."

The parties then repaired to the spot with two pairs of ship's pistols which Mr. Tallboys had smuggled on shore; and as soon as they were on the ground the gunner called Mr. Easthupp out of the cooperage. In the meantime Gascoigne had been measuring an equilateral triangle of twelve paces, and marked it out. Mr. Tallboys, on his return with the purser's steward, went over the ground, and finding that it was "equal angles subtended by equal sides," declared that it was all right. Easy took his station, the boatswain was put into his, and Mr. Easthupp, who was quite in a mystery, was led by the gunner to the third position.

"But, Mr. Tallboys," said the purser's steward, "I don't understand this. Mr. Easy will first fight Mr. Biggs, will he not?"

"No," replied the gunner, "this is a duel of three. You will fire at Mr. Easy, Mr. Easy will fire at Mr. Biggs, and Mr. Biggs will fire at you. It is all arranged, Mr. Easthupp."

"But," said Mr. Easthupp, "I do not understand it. Why is Mr. Biggs to fire at me? I have no quarrel with Mr. Biggs."

"Because Mr. Easy fires at Mr. Biggs, and Mr. Biggs must have his shot as well."

"If you have ever been in the company of gentlemen, Mr. Easthupp," observed Gascoigne, "you must know something about duelling."

"Yes, yes, I've kept the best company, Mr. Gascoigne, and I can give a gentleman satisfaction; but——"

"Then, sir, if that is the case, you must know that your honour is in the hands of your second, and that no gentleman appeals."

"Yes, yes, I know that, Mr. Gascoigne; but still I've no quarrel with Mr. Biggs, and therefore, Mr. Biggs, of course you will not aim at me."

"Why, you don't think that I am going to be fired at for nothing," replied the boatswain; "no, no, I'll have my shot, anyhow."

"But at your friend, Mr. Biggs?"

"All the same, I shall fire at somebody—shot for shot, and hit the luckiest."

"Vel, gentlemen, I purtest against these proceedings," replied Mr. Easthupp; "I came here to have satisfaction from Mr. Easy, and not to be fired at by Mr. Biggs."

"Don't you have satisfaction when you fire at Mr. Easy?" replied the gunner; "what more would you have?"

"I purtest against Mr. Biggs firing at me."

"So you would have a shot without receiving one," cried Gascoigne; "the fact is that this fellow's a confounded coward, and ought to be kicked into the cooperage again."

At this affront Mr. Easthupp rallied, and accepted the pistol offered by the gunner.

"You 'ear those words, Mr. Biggs; pretty language to use to a gentleman. You shall 'ear from me, sir, as soon as the ship is paid off. I purtest no longer, Mr. Tallboys; death before dishonour. I'm a gentleman, damme!"

At all events, the swell was not a very courageous gentleman, for he trembled most exceedingly as he pointed his pistol.

The gunner gave the word, as if he were exercising the great guns on board ship.

"Cock your locks!"—"Take good aim at the object!"—"Fire!"—"Stop your vents!"

The only one of the combatants who appeared to comply with the latter supplementary order was Mr. Easthupp, who clapped his hand to his trousers behind, gave a loud yell, and then dropped down; the bullet having passed clean through his seat of honour, from his having presented his broadside as a target to the boatswain as he faced towards our hero. Jack's shot had also taken effect, having passed through both the boatswain's cheeks, without further mischief than extracting two of his best upper double teeth, and forcing through the hole of the further cheek the boatswain's own quid of tobacco. As for Mr. Easthupp's ball, as

he was very unsettled, and shut his eyes before he fired, it had gone the Lord knows where.

The purser's steward lay on the ground and screamed. The boatswain spit his double teeth and two or three mouthfuls of blood out, and then threw down his pistols in a rage.

"A pretty business, by God," sputtered he; "he's put my pipe out. How the devil am I to pipe to dinner when I'm ordered, all my wind 'scaping through the cheeks?"

In the meantime the others had gone to the assistance of the purser's steward, who continued his vociferations. They examined him, and considered a wound in that part not to be dangerous.

"Hold your confounded bawling," cried the gunner, "or you'll have the guard down here; you're not hurt."

"Han't hi!" roared the steward. "Oh, let me die, let me die; don't move me!"

"Nonsense," cried the gunner, "you must get up and walk down to the boat; if you don't we'll leave you—hold your tongue, confound you. You won't? then I'll give you something to halloo for."

Whereupon Mr. Tallboys commenced cuffing the poor wretch right and left, who received so many swinging boxes of the ear that he was soon reduced to merely pitiful plaints of, "Oh dear!—such inhumanity—I purtest—oh dear! must I get up? I can't, indeed."

"I do not think he can move, Mr. Tallboys," said Gascoigne; "I should think the best plan would be to call up two of the men from the cooperage, and let them take him at once to the hospital."

The gunner went down to the cooperage to call the men. Mr. Biggs, who had bound up his face as if he had a toothache, for the bleeding had been very slight, came up to the purser's steward.

"What the hell are you making such a howling about? Look at me, with two shot-holes through my figure-head, while you have only got one in your stern. I wish I could change with you, by heavens, for I could use my whistle then—now if I attempt to pipe, there will be such a wasteful expenditure of his Majesty's stores of wind, that I never shall get out a note. A wicked shot of yours, Mr. Easy."

"I really am very sorry," replied Jack, with a polite bow, "and I beg to offer my best apology."

During this conversation the purser's steward felt very faint, and thought he was going to die.

"Oh dear! oh dear! what a fool I was; I never was a gentleman—only

a swell. I shall die; I never will pick a pocket again—never—never—God forgive me!”

“Why, confound the fellow,” cried Gascoigne—“so you were a pickpocket, were you?”

“I never will again,” replied the fellow, in a faint voice. “Hi’ll hamend and lead a good life—a drop of water—oh! lagged at last!”

Then the poor wretch fainted away; and Mr. Tallboys coming up with the men, he was taken on their shoulders and walked off to the hospital, attended by the gunner and also the boatswain, who thought he might as well have a little medical advice before he went on board.

“Well, Easy,” said Gascoigne, collecting the pistols and tying them up in his handkerchief, “I’ll be shot but we’re in a pretty scrape; there’s no hushing this up. I’ll be hanged if I care, it’s the best piece of fun I ever met with.” And at the remembrance of it Gascoigne laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks. Jack’s mirth was not quite so excessive, as he was afraid that the purser’s steward was severely hurt, and expressed his fears.

“At all events you did not hit him,” replied Gascoigne; “all you have to answer for is the boatswain’s mug—I think you’ve stopped his jaw for the future.”

“I’m afraid that our leave will be stopped for the future,” replied Jack.

“That we may take our oaths of,” replied Gascoigne.

“Then look you, Ned,” said Easy; “I’ve lots of dollars—we may as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb, as the saying is. I vote that we do not go on board.”

“Sawbridge will send and fetch us,” replied Ned; “but he must find us first.”

“That won’t take long, for the soldiers will soon have our description and rout us out. We shall be pinned in a couple of days.”

“Confound it; and they say that the ship is to be hove down, and that we shall be here six weeks at least, cooped up on board in a broiling sun, and nothing to do but to watch the pilot fish playing round the rudder and munch bad apricots. I won’t go on board. Look ye, Jack,” said Gascoigne, “have you plenty of money?”

“I have twenty doubloons, besides dollars,” replied Jack.

“Well, then, we will pretend to be so much alarmed at the result of this duel that we dare not show ourselves lest we should be hung. I will write a note and send it to Jolliffe, to say that we have hid ourselves until the affair is blown over, and beg him to intercede with the captain

and first lieutenant. I will tell him all the particulars, and refer to the gunner for the truth of it; and then I know that, although we should be punished, they will only laugh. But I will pretend that Easthupp is killed, and we are frightened out of our lives. That will be it; and then let's get on board one of the speronares which come with fruit from Sicily, sail in the night for Palermo, and then we'll have a cruise for a fortnight, and when the money is all gone we'll come back."

"That's a capital idea, Ned, and the sooner we do it the better. I will write to the captain, begging him to get me off from being hung, and telling him where we have fled to, and that letter shall be given after we have sailed."

They were two very nice lads—our hero and Gascoigne.

THE FIGHT ON THE RAFT

(FROM "LIFE ON THE MISSISSIPPI," BY MARK TWAIN)

Huck Finn, son of the town drunkard, has run away from a persecuting father and a persecuting good widow. He is accompanied by a slave who has escaped. They have found a fragment of raft and are floating down the river by night for Cairo, where the negro will win freedom. But, in a fog, they pass Cairo without knowing it. Suspecting the truth, Huck Finn is persuaded to swim down to a huge raft, creep aboard in the darkness and gather the needed information by eavesdropping.

I STOOD up and shook my rags off and jumped into the river, and struck out for the raft's light. By and by, when I got down nearly to her, I eased up and went slow and cautious. But everything was all right—nobody at the sweeps. So I swum down along the raft till I was most abreast the camp fire in the middle, then I crawled aboard and inched along and got in amongst some bundles of shingles on the weather side of the fire. There was thirteen men there—they was the watch on deck of course. And a mighty rough-looking lot, too. They had a jug, and tin cups, and they kept the jug moving. One man was singing—roaring, you may say; and it wasn't a nice song—for a parlour anyway. He roared through his nose, and strung out the last word of every line very long. When he was done they all fetched a kind of Injun war-whoop, and then another was sung. It begun:—

There was a woman in our towdn,
In our towdn did dwed'l (dwell),
She loved her husband dear-i-lee,
But another man twyste as wed'l.

Singing too, riloo, riloo, riloo,
Ri-too, riloo, rilay——e,
She loved her husband dear-i-lee,
But another man twyste as wed'l.

And so on—fourteen verses. It was kind of poor, and when he was

going to start on the next verse one of them said it was the tune the old cow died on; and another one said, "Oh, give us a rest." And another one told him to take a walk. They made fun of him till he got mad and jumped up and begun to cuss the crowd, and said he could lame any thief in the lot. They was all about to make a break for him, but the biggest man there jumped up and says—

"Set whar you are, gentlemen. Leave him to me; he's my meat."

Then he jumped up in the air three times and cracked his heels together every time. He flung off a buckskin coat that was all hung with fringes, and says, "You lay thar tell the chawin-up's done"; and flung his hat down, which was all over ribbons, and says, "You lay thar tell his sufferins is over."

Then he jumped up in the air and cracked his heels together again and shouted—

"Whoo-oo! I'm the old original iron-jawed, brass-mounted, copper-bellied corpse-maker from the wilds of Arkansaw!—Look at me! I'm the man they call Sudden Death and General Desolation! Sired by a hurricane, dam'd by an earthquake, half-brother to the cholera, nearly related to the small-pox on the mother's side! Look at me! I take nineteen alligators and a bar'l of whiskey for breakfast when I'm in robust health, and a bushel of rattlesnakes and a dead body when I'm ailing! I split the everlasting rocks with my glance, and I squench the thunder when I speak! Whoo-oo! Stand back and give me room according to my strength! Blood's my natural drink, and the wails of the dying is music to my ear! Cast your eye on me, gentlemen!—and lay low and hold your breath, for I'm bout to turn myself loose!"

All the time he was getting this off, he was shaking his head and looking fierce, and kind of swelling around in a little circle, tucking up his wrist-bands, and now and then straightening up and beating his breast with his fist, saying, "Look at me, gentlemen!" When he got through, he jumped up and cracked his heels together three times, and let off a roaring, "Whoo-oo! I'm the bloodiest son of a wildcat that lives!"

Then the man that had started the row tilted his old slouch hat down over his right eye; then he bent stooping forward, with his back sagged and his south end sticking out far, and his fists a-shoving out and drawing in in front of him, and so went around in a little circle about three times, swelling himself up and breathing hard. Then he straightened, and jumped up and cracked his heels together three times,

before he lit again (that made them cheer), and he begun to shout like this—

“Whoo-oop! bow you neck and spread, for the kingdom of sorrow’s a-coming! Hold me down to the earth, for I feel my powers a-working! whoo-oop! I’m a child of sin, *don’t* let me get a start! Smoked glass, here, for all! Don’t attempt to look at me with the naked eye, gentlemen! When I’m playful I use the meridians of longitude and parallels of latitude for a seine, and drag the Atlantic Ocean for whales! I scratch my head with the lightning, and purr myself to sleep with the thunder! When I’m cold, I bile the Gulf of Mexico and bathe in it; when I’m hot I fan myself with an equinoctial storm; when I’m thirsty I reach up and suck a cloud dry like a sponge; when I range the earth hungry, famine follows in my tracks! Whoo-oop! Bow you neck and spread! I put my hand on the sun’s face and make it night in the earth; I bite a piece out of the moon and hurry the seasons; I shake myself and crumble the mountains! Contemplate me through leather—*don’t* use the naked eye! I’m the man with a petrified heart and biler-iron bowels! The massacre of isolated communities is the pastime of my idle moments, the destruction of nationalities the serious business of my life! The boundless vastness of the great American desert is my enclosed property, and I bury my dead on my own premises!”

He jumped up and cracked his heels together three times before he lit (they cheered him again), and as he come down he shouted out: “Whoo-oop! bow your neck and spread, for the pet child of calamity’s a-coming!”

Then the other one went to swelling around and blowing again—the first one—the one they called Bob; next, the Child of Calamity chipped in again, bigger than ever; then they both got at it at the same time, swelling round and round each other and punching their fists most into each other’s faces, and whooping and jawing the Injuns; then Bob called the Child names, and the Child called him names back again: next, Bob called him a heap rougher names and the Child come back at him with the very worst kind of language; next, Bob knocked the Child’s hat off, and the Child picked it up and kicked Bob’s ribbony hat about six foot; Bob went and got it and said never mind, this warn’t going to be the last of this thing, because he was a man that never forgot and never forgive, and so the Child better look out, for there was a time a-coming, just as sure as he was a living man, that he would have to answer to him with the best blood in his body. The Child said no man was willinger than he was for that time to come, and he would give

Bob fair warning *now*, never to cross his path again, for he could never rest till he had waded in his blood, for such was his nature, though he was sparing him now on account of his family, if he had one.

Both of them was edging away in different directions, growling and shaking their heads and going on about what they was going to do; but a little black-whiskered chap skipped up and says—

“Come back here, you couple of chicken-livered cowards, and I’ll thrash the two of ye!”

And he done it, too. He snatched them, he jerked them this way and that, he booted them around, he knocked them sprawling faster than they could get up. Why, it warn’t two minutes till they begged like dogs—and how the other lot did yell and laugh and clap their hands all the way through, and shout “Sail in, Corpse-Maker!” “Hi! at him again, Child of Calamity!” “Bully for you, little Davy!” Well, it was a perfect pow-wow for a while. Bob and the Child had red noses and black eyes when they got through. Little Davy made them own up that they were sneaks and cowards and not fit to eat with a dog or drink with a nigger; then Bob and the Child shook hands with each other, very solemn, and said they had always respected each other and was willing to let by-gones be by-gones. So then they washed their faces in the river; and just then there was a loud order to stand by for a crossing, and some of them went forward to man the sweeps there, and the rest went aft to handle the after-sweeps.

MR. PICKWICK AND THE CABMAN

(FROM "PICKWICK PAPERS," BY CHARLES DICKENS)

The encounter between Mr. Pickwick and the cabman, and the opportune arrival of Mr. Fingle occurred when Mr. Pickwick and his friends were setting out from the "Golden Cross," at Charing Cross, in order to study the habits of people, and to report the result of their observations to the Pickwick Club.

"CAB!" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Here you are, sir," shouted a strange specimen of the human race, in a sackcloth coat, and apron of the same, who with a brass label and number round his neck, looked as if he were catalogued in some collection of rarities. This was the waterman. "Here you are, sir. Now, then, fust cab!" And the first cab having been fetched from the public-house, where he had been smoking his first pipe, Mr. Pickwick and his portmanteau were thrown into the vehicle.

"Golden Cross," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Only a bob's worth, Tommy," cried the driver sulkily, for the information of his friend the waterman, as the cab drove off.

"How old is that horse, my friend?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, rubbing his nose with the shilling he had reserved for the fare.

"Forty-two," replied the driver, eyeing him askant.

"What!" ejaculated Mr. Pickwick, laying his hand upon his note-book. The driver reiterated his former statement. Mr. Pickwick looked very hard at the man's face, but his features were immovable, so he noted down the fact forthwith.

"And how long do you keep him out at a time?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, searching for further information.

"Two or three weeks," replied the man.

"Weeks!" said Mr. Pickwick in astonishment—and out came the note-book again.

"He lives at Pentonwil when he's at home," observed the driver,

coolly, "but we seldom takes him home on account of his weakness."

"On account of his weakness!" reiterated the perplexed Mr. Pickwick.

"He always falls down when he's took out o' the cab," continued the driver, "but when he's in it, we bears him up werry tight, and takes him in werry short, so as he can't werry well fall down; and we've got a pair o' precious large wheels on, so ven he *does* move, they run after him, and he must go on—he can't help it."

Mr. Pickwick entered every word of this statement in his note-book, with the view of communicating it to the club, as a singular instance of the tenacity of life in horses, under trying circumstances. The entry was scarcely completed when they reached the Golden Cross. Down jumped the driver, and out got Mr. Pickwick. Mr. Tupman, Mr. Snodgrass, and Mr. Winkle, who had been anxiously waiting the arrival of their illustrious leader, crowded to welcome him.

"Here's your fare," said Mr. Pickwick, holding out the shilling to the driver.

What was the learned man's astonishment, when that unaccountable person flung the money on the pavement, and requested in figurative terms to be allowed the pleasure of fighting him (Mr. Pickwick) for the amount!

"You are mad," said Mr. Snodgrass.

"Or drunk," said Mr. Winkle.

"Or both," said Mr. Tupman.

"Come on!" said the cab-driver, sparring away like clockwork.

"Come on—all four on you."

"Here's a lark!" shouted half-a-dozen hackney coachmen. "Go to vork, Sam,"—and they crowded with great glee round the party.

"What's the row, Sam?" inquired one gentleman in black calico sleeves.

"Row!" replied the cabman, "what did he want my number for?"

"I didn't want your number," said the astonished Mr. Pickwick.

"What did you take it for, then?" inquired the cabman.

"I didn't take it," said Mr. Pickwick, indignantly.

"Would any body believe," continued the cab-driver, appealing to the crowd, "would any body believe as an informer 'ud go about in a man's cab, not only takin' down his number, but ev'ry word he says into the bargain." (A light flashed upon Mr. Pickwick—it was the note-book.)

"Did he though?" inquired another cabman.

"Yes, did he," replied the first; "and then arter aggerawatin' me to assault him, gets three witnesses here to prove it. But I'll give it him, if I've six months for it. Come on!" and the cabman dashed his hat upon the ground, with a reckless disregard of his own private property, and knocked Mr. Pickwick's spectacles off, and followed up the attack with a blow on Mr. Pickwick's nose, and another on Mr. Pickwick's chest, and a third in Mr. Snodgrass's eye, and a fourth, by way of variety, in Mr. Tupman's waistcoat, and then danced into the road, and then back again to the pavement, and finally dashed the whole temporary supply of breath out of Mr. Winkle's body; and all in half-a-dozen seconds.

"Where's an officer?" said Mr. Snodgrass.

"Put 'em under the pump," suggested a hot-pieman.

"You shall smart for this," gasped Mr. Pickwick.

"Informers!" shouted the crowd.

"Come on," cried the cabman, who had been sparring without cessation the whole time.

The mob had hitherto been passive spectators of the scene, but as the intelligence of the Pickwickians being informers was spread among them, they began to canvass with considerable vivacity the propriety of enforcing the heated pastry-vendor's proposition; and there is no saying what acts of personal aggression they might have committed had not the affray been unexpectedly terminated by the interposition of a newcomer.

"What's the fun?" said a rather tall thin young man, in a green coat, emerging suddenly from the coach-yard.

"Informers!" shouted the crowd again.

"We are not," roared Mr. Pickwick, in a tone which, to any dispassionate listener, carried conviction with it.

"Ain't you, though—ain't you?" said the young man, appealing to Mr. Pickwick, and making his way through the crowd by the infallible process of elbowing the countenances of its component members.

That learned man in a few hurried words explained the real state of the case.

"Come along, then," said he of the green coat, lugging Mr. Pickwick after him by main force, and talking the whole way. "Here, No. 924, take your fare, and take yourself off—respectable gentleman,—know him well—none of your nonsense—this way, sir—where's your friends?—all a mistake, I see—never mind—accidents will happen—best regu-

lated families—never say die—down on your luck—pull him up—put that in his pipe—like the flavour—damned rascals.” And with a lengthened string of similar broken sentences, delivered with extraordinary volubility, the stranger led the way to the travellers’ waiting-room, whither he was closely followed by Mr. Pickwick and his disciples.

“Here, waiter!” shouted the stranger, ringing the bell with tremendous violence, “glasses round,—brandy and water, hot and strong, and sweet, and plenty,—eye damaged, sir? Waiter! raw beef-steak for the gentleman’s eye,—nothing like raw beef-steak for a bruise, sir; cold lamp-post very good, but lamp-post inconvenient—damned odd standing in the open street half-an-hour, with your eye against a lamp-post—eh,—very good—ha! ha!” And the stranger, without stopping to take breath, swallowed at a draught full half-a-pint of the reeking brandy and water, and flung himself into a chair with as much ease as if nothing uncommon had occurred.

THE BULLY OF THE *CAVENDISH*

(FROM "LIGHT FREIGHTS," BY W. W. JACOBS)

"TALKING of prize-fighters, sir," said the night-watchman, who had nearly danced himself over the edge of the wharf in illustrating one of Mr. Corbett's most trusted blows, and was now sitting down taking in sufficient air for three, "they ain't wot they used to be when I was a boy. They advertise in the papers for months and months about their fights, and when it does come off, they do it with gloves, and they're all right agin a day or two arter.

"I saw a picter the other day o' one punching a bag wot couldn't punch back, for practice. Why, I remember as a young man Sinker Pitt, as used to 'ave the 'King's Arms' 'ere in 'is old age; when 'e wanted practice 'is plan was to dress up in a soft 'at and black coat like a chapel minister or something, and go in a pub and contradict people; sailor-men for choice. He'd ha' no more thought o' hitting a pore 'armless bag than I should ha' thought of hitting 'im.

"The strangest prize-fighter I ever come acrost was one wot shipped with me on the *Cavendish*. He was the most eggstrordinry fighter I've ever seen or 'eard of, and 'e got to be such a nuisance afore 'e'd done with us that we could 'ardly call our souls our own. He shipped as an ordinary seaman—a unfair thing to do, as 'e was anything but ordinary, and 'ad no right to be there at all.

"We'd got one terror on board afore he come, and that was Bill Bone, one o' the biggest and strongest men I've ever seen down a ship's fo'c'sle, and that's saying a good deal. Built more like a bull than a man, 'e was, and when he was in his tantrums the best thing to do was to get out of 'is way or else get into your bunk and keep quiet. Oppersition used to send 'im crazy a'most, an' if 'e said a red shirt was a blue one, you 'ad to keep quiet. It didn't do to agree with 'im and call it blue even, cos if you did he'd call you a liar and punch you for telling lies.

"He was the only drawback to that ship. We 'ad a nice old man,

good mates, and good grub. You may know it was *Ar* when I tell you that most of us 'ad been in 'er for several v'y'ges.

"But Bill was a drawback, and no mistake. In the main he was a 'earty, good-tempered sort o' shipmate as you'd wish to see, only, as I said afore, oppersition was a thing he could not and would not stand. It used to fly to his 'ead direckly.

"The v'y'ge I'm speaking of—we used to trade between Australia and London—Bill came aboard about an hour afore the ship sailed. The rest of us was already aboard and down below, some of us stowing our things away and the rest sitting down and telling each other lies about wot we'd been doing. Bill came lurching down the ladder, and Tom Baker put 'is 'and to 'im to steady 'im as he got to the bottom.

"'Who are you putting your 'ands on?' ses Bill, glaring at 'im.

"'Only 'olding you up, Bill,' ses Tom, smiling.

"'Oh,' ses Bill.

"He put 'is back up agin a bunk and pulled hisself together.

"'Olding of me—up—was you?' he ses; 'whaffor, if I might be so bold as to arsk?'

"'I thought your foot 'ad slipped, Bill, old man,' ses Tom; 'but I'm sorry if it 'adn't.'

"'Sorry if my foot didn't slip?' he ses.

"'You know what I mean, Bill,' ses Tom, smiling an uneasy smile.

"'Don't laugh at me,' roars Bill.

"'I wasn't laughing, Bill, old pal,' ses Tom.

"'E's called me a liar,' ses Bill, looking round at us; 'called me a liar. 'Old my coat, Charlie, and I'll split 'im in halves.'

"Charlie took the coat like a lamb, though he was Tom's pal, and Tom looked round to see whether he couldn't nip up the ladder and get away, but Bill was just in front of it. Then Tom found out that one of 'is bootlaces was undone and he knelt down to do it up, and this young ordinary seaman, Joe Simms by name, put his 'cad out of his bunk and he ses, quiet-like:

"'You ain't afraid of that thing, mate, are you?'

"'Wot?' screams Bill, starting.

"'Don't make such a noise when I'm speaking,' ses Joe; 'where's your manners, you great 'ulking rascal?'

"I thought Bill would ha' dropped with surprise at being spoke to like that. His face was purple all over and 'e stood staring at Joe as though 'e didn't know wot to make of 'im. And we stared too, Joe being a smallish sort o' chap and not looking at all strong.

"'Go easy, mate,' whispers Tom; 'you don't know who you're talking to.'

"'Bosh,' ses Joe, 'he's no good. He's too fat and too silly to do any 'arm. He shan't 'urt you while I'm 'ere.'

"He just rolled out of 'is bunk, and standing in front of Bill, put 'is fists up at 'im and stared 'im straight in the eye.

"'You touch that man,' he ses, quietly, pointing to Tom, 'and I'll give you such a dressing-down as you've never 'ad afore. Mark my words, now.'

"'I wasn't going to 'it 'im,' ses Bill, in a strange, mild voice.

"'You'd better not,' ses the young 'un, shaking his fist at 'im; 'you'd better not, my lad. If there's any fighting to be done in this fo'c'sle I'll do it. Mind that.'

"It's no good me saying we was staggered; becos staggered ain't no word for it. To see Bill put 'is hands in 'is pockets and try and whistle, and then sit down on a locker and scratch 'is 'ead, was the most amazing thing I've ever seen. Presently 'e begins to sing under his breath.

"'Stop that 'umming,' ses Joe; 'when I want you to 'um I'll tell you.'

"Bill left off 'umming, and then he gives a little cough behind the back of 'is 'and, and, arter fidgiting about a bit with 'is feet, went up on deck again.

"'Strewth,' ses Tom, looking round at us, 'ave we shipped a bloomin' prize-fighter?"

"'Wot did you call me?' ses Joe, looking at 'im.

"'Nothing, mate,' ses Tom, drawing back.

"'You keep a quiet tongue in your 'ead,' ses Joe, 'and speak when you're spoken to, my lad.'

"He was a ordinary seaman, mind, talking to A.B.'s like that. Men who'd been up aloft and doing their little bit when 'e was going about catching cold in 'is little petticuts. Still, if Bill could stand it, we supposed as we'd better.

"Bill stayed upon deck till we was under way, and 'is spirit seemed to be broke. He went about 'is work like a man wot was walking in 'is sleep, and when breakfast come 'e 'ardly tasted it.

"Joe made a splendid breakfast, and when he'd finished 'e went to Bill's bunk and chucked the things out all over the place and said 'e was going to 'ave it instead of his own. And Bill sat there and took it all quiet, and by and by he took 'is things up and put them in Joe's bunk without a word.

"It was the most peaceful fust day we 'ad ever 'ad down that fo'c'sle, Bill usually being in 'is tantrums the fust day or two at sea, and wanting to know why 'e'd been born. If you talked you was noisy and worriting, and if you didn't talk you was sulky; but this time 'e sat quite still and didn't interfere a bit. It was such a pleasant change that we all felt a bit grateful, and at tea-time Tom Baker patted Joe on the back and said he was one o' the right old sort.

"'You've been in a scrap or two in your time, I know,' he ses, admiring-like. 'I knew you was a bit of a one with your fists direckly I see you.'

"'Oh, 'ow's that?' asks Joe.

"'I could see by your nose,' ses Tom.

"'You never know how to take people like that. The words 'ad 'ardly left Tom's lips afore the other ups with a basin of 'ot tea and heaves it all over 'im.

"'Take that, you insulting rascal,' he ses, as Tom jumped up spluttering and wiping 'is face with his coat. 'How dare you insult me?'

"'Get up,' ses Tom, dancing with rage. 'Get up; prize-fighter or no prize-fighter, I'll mark you.'

"'Sit down,' ses Bill, turning round.

"'I'm going to 'ave a go at 'im, Bill,' ses Tom; 'if you're afraid of 'im, I ain't.'

"'Sit down,' ses Bill, starting up. "'Ow dare you insult me like that?'

"'Like wot?' ses Tom, staring.

"'If I can't lick 'im you can't,' ses Bill; 'that's 'ow it is, mate.'

"'But I can try,' ses Tom.

"'All right,' ses Bill. 'Me fust, then if you lick me, you can 'ave a go at 'im. If you can't lick me, 'ow can you lick im?'

"'Sit down, both of you,' ses young Joe, drinking Bill's tea to make up for 'is own. 'And mind you, I'm cock of this fo'c'sle, and don't you forget it. Sit down, both of you, afore I start on you.'

"They both sat down, but Tom wasn't quick enough to please Bill, and he got a wipe o' the side o' the 'ead that made it ring for an hour afterwards.

"That was the beginning of it, and instead of 'aving one master we found we'd got two, owing to the eggstrordinry way Bill had o' looking at things. He gave Joe best without even 'aving a try at him, and if anybody else wanted to 'ave a try, it was a insult to Bill. We

couldn't make 'ead or tail of it, and all we could get out of Bill was that 'e had one time 'ad a turn-up with Joe Simms ashore, which he'd remember all 'is life. It must ha' been something of a turn, too, the way Bill used to try and curry favour with 'im.

"In about three days our life wasn't worth living, and the fo'c'sle was more like a Sunday-school class than anything else. In the fust place Joe put down swearing. He wouldn't 'ave no bad langwidge, he said, and he didn't neither. If a man used a bad word Joe would pull 'im up the fust time, and the second he'd order Bill to 'it 'im, being afraid of 'urting 'im too much 'imself. 'Arf the men 'ad to leave off talking altogether when Joe was by, but the way they used to swear when he wasn't was something shocking. Harry Moore got clergyman's sore throat one arternoon through it.

"Then Joe objected to us playing cards for money, and we 'ad to arrange on the quiet that brace buttons was ha'-pennies and coat buttons pennies, and that lasted until one evening Tom Baker got up and danced and nearly went off 'is 'ead with joy through havin' won a few dozen. That was enough for Joe, and Bill by his orders took the cards and pitched 'em over the side.

"Sweet-'earting and that sort o' thing Joe couldn't abear, and Ned Davis put his foot into it finely one arternoon through not knowing. He was lying in 'is bunk smoking and thinking, and by and by he looked across at Bill, who was 'arf asleep, and 'e ses:

"'I wonder whether you'll see that little gal at Melbourne agin this trip, Bill."

"Bill's eyes opened wide and he shook 'is fist at Ned, as Ned thought, playful-like.

"'All right, I'm a-looking at you, Bill,' 'e ses, 'I can see you.'

"'What gal is that, Ned?' ses Joe, who was in the next bunk to him, and I saw Bill's eyes screw up tight, and 'e suddenly fell fast asleep.

"'I don't know 'er name,' ses Ned, 'but she was very much struck on Bill; they used to go to the theayter together.'

"'Pretty gal?' ses Joe, leading 'im on.

"'Rather,' ses Ned. 'Trust Bill for that, 'e always gets the prettiest gal in the place—I've known as many as six and seven to——'

"'WOT!' screams Bill, waking up out of 'is sleep, and jumping out of 'is bunk.

"'Keep still, Bill, and don't interfere when I'm talking,' ses Joe, very sharp.

“‘E’s insulted me,’ ses Bill; ‘talking about gals when everybody knows I ’ate ’em worse than pison.’

“‘Hold your tongue,’ ses Joe. ‘Now, Ned, what’s this about this little gal? What’s ’er name?’

“‘It was only a little joke o’ mine,’ ses Ned, who saw ’e’d put ’is foot in it. ‘Bill ’ates ’em worse than—worse than—pison.’

“‘You’re telling me a lie,’ ses Joe, sternly. ‘Who was it?’

“‘It was only my fun, Joe,’ ses Ned.

“‘Oh, very well then, I’m going to ’ave a bit of fun now,’ ses Joe. ‘Bill!’

“‘Yes,’ ses Bill.

“‘I won’t ’it Ned myself for fear I shall do ’im a lasting injury,’ ses Joe, ‘so you just start on ’im and keep on till ’e tells all about your goings on with that gal.’

“‘Hit *’im* to make ’im tell about *me*!’ ses Bill, staring ’is ’ardest.

“‘You ’eard wot I said,’ ses Joe; ‘don’t repeat my words. You, a married man, too; I’ve got sisters of my own, and I’m going to put this sort o’ thing down. If you don’t down ’im, I will.’

“Ned wasn’t much of a fighter, and I ’alf expected to see ’im do a bolt up on deck and complain to the skipper. He did look like it for a moment, then he stood up, looking a bit white as Bill walked over to ’im, and the next moment ’is fist flew out, and afore we could turn round I’m blest if Bill wasn’t on the floor. ’E got up as if ’e was dazed-like, struck out wild at Ned and missed ’im, and the next moment was knocked down agin. We could ’ardly believe our eyes, and as for Ned, ’e looked as though ’e’d been doing miracles by mistake.

“When Bill got up the second time ’e was that shaky ’e could ’ardly stand, and Ned ’ad it all ’is own way, until at last ’e got Bill’s ’ead under ’is arm and punched at it till they were both tired.

“‘All right,’ ses Bill; ‘I’ve ’ad enough. I’ve met my master.’

“‘*Wot?*’ ses Joe, staring.

“‘I met my master,’ ses Bill, going and sitting down. ‘Ned ’as knocked me about crook.’

“Joe looked at ’im, speechless, and then without saying another word, or ’aving a go at Ned himself, as we expected, ’e went up on deck, and Ned crossed over and sat down by Bill.

“‘I ’ope I didn’t hurt you, mate,’ he ses, kindly.

“‘Hurt me?’ roars Bill. ‘You! You ’urt me? You, you little bag o’ bones. Wait till I get you ashore by yourself for five minits, Ned Davis, and then you’ll know what ’urting means.’

"'I don't understand you, Bill,' ses Ned; 'you're a mystery, that's what you are; but I tell you plain when you go ashore you don't have me for a companion.'

"It was a mystery to all of us, and it got worse and worse as time went on. Bill didn't dare to call 'is soul 'is own, although Joe only hit 'im once the whole time, and then not very hard, and he excused 'is cowardice by telling us of a man Joe 'ad killed in a fight down in one o' them West-end clubs.

"Wot with Joe's Sunday-school ways and Bill backing 'em up, we was all pretty glad by the time we got to Melbourne. It was like getting out o' prison to get away from Joe for a little while. All but Bill, that is, and Joe took 'im to hear a dissolving views on John Bunyan. Bill said 'e'd be delighted to go, but the language he used about 'im on the quiet when he came back showed what 'e thought of it. I don't know who John Bunyan is, or wot he's done, but the things Bill said about 'im I wouldn't soil my tongue by repeating.

"Arter we'd been there two or three days we began to feel a'most sorry for Bill. Night arter night, when we was ashore, Joe would take 'im off and look arter 'im, and at last, partly for 'is sake, but more to see the fun, Tom Baker managed to think o' something to put things straight.

"'You stay aboard to-night, Bill,' he ses, one morning, 'and you'll see something that'll startle you.'

"'Worse than you?' ses Bill, whose temper was getting worse and worse.

"'There'll be an end o' that bullying, Joe,' ses Tom, taking 'im by the arm. 'We've arranged to give 'im a lesson as'll lay 'im up for a time.'

"'Oh,' ses Bill, looking 'ard at a boat wot was passing.

"'We've got Dodgy Pete coming to see us to-night,' ses Tom, in a whisper; 'there'll only be the second officer aboard, and he'll likely be asleep. Dodgy's one o' the best light-weights in Australia, and if 'e don't fix up Mister Joe, it'll be a pity.'

"'You're a fair treat, Tom,' ses Bill, turning round; 'that's what you are. A fair treat.'

"'I thought you'd be pleased, Bill,' ses Tom.

"'Pleased ain't no name for it, Tom,' answers Bill. 'You've took a load off my mind.'

"The fo'c'sle was pretty full that evening, everybody giving each other a little grin on the quiet, and looking over to where Joe was sitting

in 'is bunk putting a button or two on his coat. At about ha'-past six Dodgy comes aboard, and the fun begins to commence.

"He was a nasty, low-looking little chap, was Dodgy, very fly-looking and very conceited. I didn't like the look of 'im at all, and unbearable as Joe was, it didn't seem to be quite the sort o' thing to get a chap aboard to 'ammer a shipmate you couldn't hammer yourself.

"'Nasty, stuffy place you've got down 'ere,' ses Dodgy, who was smoking a big cigar; 'I can't think 'ow you can stick it.'

"'It ain't bad for a fo'c'sle,' ses Charlie.

"'An' what's that in that bunk over there?' ses Dodgy, pointing with 'is cigar at Joe.

"'Hush, be careful,' ses Tom, with a wink, 'that's a prize-fighter.'

"'Oh,' ses Dodgy, grinning, 'I thought it was a monkey.'

"'You might 'ave heard a pin drop, and there was a pleasant feeling went all over us at the thought of the little fight we was going to see all to ourselves, as Joe lays down the jacket he was stitching at and just puts 'is little 'ead over the side o' the bunk.

"'Bill,' he ses, yawning.

"'Well,' ses Bill, all on the grin like the rest of us.

"'Who is that 'andsome, gentlemanly-looking young feller over there smoking a half-crown cigar?' ses Joe.

"'That's a young gent wot's come down to 'ave a look round,' ses Tom, as Dodgy takes 'is cigar out of 'is mouth and looks round, puzzled.

"'Wot a terror 'e must be to the gals with them lovely little peepers of 'is,' ses Joe, shaking 'is 'ead. 'Bill!'

"'Well,' ses Bill, agin, as Dodgy got up.

"'Take that lovely little gentleman and kick 'im up the fo'c'sle ladder,' ses Joe, taking up 'is jacket agin; 'and don't make too much noise over it, cos I've got a bit of a 'eadache, else I'd do it myself.'

"'There was a laugh went all round then, and Tom Baker was near killing himself, and then I'm blessed if Bill didn't get up and begin taking off 'is coat.

"'Wot's the game?' ses Dodgy, staring.

"'I'm obeying orders,' ses Bill. 'Last time I was in London, Joe 'ere half killed me one time, and 'e made me promise to do 'as 'e told me for six months. I'm very sorry, mate, but I've got to kick you up that ladder.'

"'You kick me up?' ses Dodgy, with a nasty little laugh.

"'I can try, mate, can't I?' ses Bill, folding 'is things up very neat and putting 'em on a locker.

“ ‘Old my cigar,’ ses Dodgy, taking it out of ’is mouth and sticking it in Charlie’s. ‘I don’t need to take my coat off to ’im.’

“ ‘E altered ’is mind, though, when he saw Bill’s chest and arms, and not only took off his coat, but his waistcoat too. Then, with a nasty look at Bill, ’e put up ’is fists and just pranced up to ’im.

“ ‘The fust blow Bill missed, and the next moment ’e got a tap on the jaw that nearly broke it, and that was followed up by one in the eye that sent ’im staggering up agin the side, and when ’e was there Dodgy’s fists were rattling all round ’im.

“ ‘I believe it was that that brought Bill round, and the next moment Dodgy was on ’is back with a blow that nearly knocked his ’ead off. Charlie grabbed at Tom’s watch and began to count, and after a little bit called out ‘Time.’ It was a silly thing to do, as it would ’ave stopped the fight then and there if it ’adn’t been for Tom’s presence of mind, saying it was two minutes slow. That gave Dodgy a chance, and he got up again and walked round Bill very careful, swearing ’ard at the small size of the fo’c’sle.

“ ‘He got in three or four at Bill afore you could wink a’most, and when Bill ’it back ’e wasn’t there. That seemed to annoy Bill more than anything, and he suddenly flung out ’is arms, and grabbing ’old of ’im flung ’im right across the fo’c’sle to where, fortunately for ’im—Dodgy, I mean—Tom Baker was sitting.

“ ‘Charlie called ‘Time’ again, and we let ’em ’ave five minutes while we ’elped Tom to bed, and then wot ’e called the ‘disgusting exhibishun’ was resumed. Bill ’ad dipped ’is face in a bucket and ’ad rubbed ’is great arms all over and was as fresh as a daisy. Dodgy looked a bit tottery, but ’e was game all through and very careful, and, try as Bill might, he didn’t seem to be able to get ’old of ’im agin.

“ ‘In five minutes more, though, it was all over, Dodgy not being able to see plain—except to get out o’ Bill’s way—and hitting wild. He seemed to think the whole fo’c’sle was full o’ Bills sitting on a locker and waiting to be punched, and the end of it was a knock-out blow from the real Bill which left ’im on the floor without a soul offering to pick ’im up.

“ ‘Bill ’elped ’im up at last and shook hands with ’im, and they rinsed their faces in the same bucket, and began to praise each other up. They sat there purring like a couple o’ cats, until at last we ’eard a smothered voice coming from Joe Simms’s bunk.

“ ‘Is it all over?’ he asks.

“ ‘Yes,’ ses somebody.

“ ‘How is Bill?’ ses Joe’s voice again.

“ ‘Look for yourself,’ ses Tom.

“Joe sat up in ’is bunk then and looked out, and he no sooner saw Bill’s face than he gave a loud cry and fell back agin, and, as true as I’m sitting here, fainted clean away. We was struck all of a ’eap, and then Bill picked up the bucket and threw some water over ’im, and by and by he comes round agin and in a dazed sort o’ way puts his arm round Bill’s neck and begins to cry.

“ ‘*Mighty Moses!*’ ses Dodgy Pete, jumping up, ‘it’s a woman!’

“ ‘It’s my *wife!*’ ses Bill.

“We understood it all then, leastways the married ones among us did. She’d shipped aboard partly to be with Bill and partly to keep an eye on ’im, and Tom Baker’s mistake about a prize-fighter had just suited ’er book better than anything. How Bill was to get ’er home ’e couldn’t think, but it ’appened the second officer had been peeping down the fo’c’sle, waiting for ever so long for a suitable opportunity to stop the fight, and the old man was so tickled about the way we’d all been done ’e gave ’er a passage back as stewardess to look arter the ship’s cat.”

VI

A BRAVE MISCELLANY

1

THE FIGHT IN THE ARENA

(FROM "QUO VADIS?" BY HENRYK SIENKIEWICZ)

The following incident takes place in the arena during the persecution which followed the burning of Rome. The maiden Lygia, betrothed to the young tribune Vinitius, is among the imprisoned Christians, together with her gigantic slave Ursus. Vinitius and his uncle Petronius, the famous "Arbiter Elegantiarum," try in vain to effect her release. Vinitius receives a command from Nero to be present at a forthcoming show in the arena. He goes, suspecting that he is summoned to witness the death of Lygia that Nero may amuse himself with the sight of his agony. At a signal from the prefect, the slave Ursus appears in the arena.

THE giant blinked, evidently dazzled by the brightness of the arena; then he moved towards the centre, looking about as if to see what he had to encounter. All the Augustales and most of the spectators knew that this was the man who had strangled Croto; hence at his appearance murmurs arose from all the benches. There was no lack of gladiators in Rome larger in stature than ordinary men, but Roman eyes had never seen the like of Ursus. Cassius, who stood by Cæsar, appeared puny in comparison. Senators, vestals, Cæsar, the Augustales, and the people gazed with the delight of experts at his powerful limbs, like the trunks of trees; at his breast, which seemed like two joined shields, and at his Herculean arms. The murmurs grew louder every moment. For the multitudes there could not be any greater pleasure than to see those muscles play in the exertion of struggle. The murmurs changed to shouts and to eager questionings: "Where live the tribes who produce such giants?" Ursus stood there in the middle of the amphitheatre naked, resembling a stone Colossus rather than a man, calm, collected, yet at the same time with the melancholy of a barbarian. Looking about the empty arena, he fixed his blue eyes in wonderment, now on the spectators, now on Cæsar, now on the grating of the dungeons, whence he expected his executioners.

At the moment when he stepped into the arena his simple heart was throbbing with the hope that death on the cross was awaiting him. But when he saw neither a cross nor a pit he thought that he did not deserve such favour, and that he would have to perish in some other way, most probably from wild beasts. He was unarmed, and had resolved to die as became a follower of the Lamb, peacefully and patiently. Meanwhile he wished to pray to the Saviour. So, kneeling in the arena, he joined his hands and raised his eyes to the stars, which twinkled above the lofty opening on the arena.

This attitude displeased the crowds. They had had enough of those Christians who died like sheep; they understood that should the giant refuse to defend himself, the spectacle would be a failure. Here and there hisses arose. Some cried for the scourgers, whose offence it was to chastise combatants who refused to fight. But silence soon followed, for no one knew what awaited the giant, nor whether he would not be ready to fight when he looked death in the face.

Indeed, they had not long to wait. Suddenly a deafening noise of trumpets arose, and at this signal a grating opened opposite the imperial box, and into the arena rushed, amid the shouts of the people, an enormous German bull, bearing on his horns the naked body of a woman.

"Lygia! Lygia!" cried Vinitius.

Then he seized his hair near the temples, writhed like a man wounded by a spear, and in a hoarse voice cried out:

"I believe! I believe! Grant a miracle, O Christ!"

He was not aware that Petronius at that moment covered his head with a toga. He thought that death or agony had closed his eyes. He did not look. He did not see. A feeling of awful emptiness seized him. No thought remained in his head, only his lips repeated, as if in delirium: "I believe! I believe!"

Suddenly the amphitheatre was hushed. The Augustales rose in their seats as one man, for something uncommon had happened in the arena. The Lygian, humble and ready to die, seeing his princess on the horns of the wild beast, sprang up as if touched by fire, and, bending forward, rushed towards the frenzied animal.

Cries of astonishment were heard on all sides. The Lygian overtook the raging bull in a twinkling and seized him by the horns.

"Look!" cried Petronius, unveiling the head of Vinitius. Vinitius raised his face, pale as a sheet, and looked at the arena with a glassy, vacant stare.

Every one held his breath. In the amphitheatre a fly might have been heard. People could not believe their own eyes. Never before was seen anything like this.

The Lygian held the wild beast by the horns. His feet were buried in the sand to his ankles. His back was bent like a bow. His head was hidden between his shoulders. The muscles swelled on his arms so that the skin seemed to crack from the pressure, but he stopped the bull in its tracks. The man and the brute remained so motionless that the spectators seemed to look at a picture representing a deed of Hercules or Theseus, or a group cut in stone. But in that apparent repose was evident the terrible exertion of two struggling forces. The bull as well as the man sank his feet deep into the sand, and his dark, shaggy body was so curved that it resembled a huge ball. Which would first be exhausted? Which would yield first? This was the question which at the moment was of greater importance to the spectators than their own fate, than that of Rome, and its rule over the world. The Lygian, in their eyes, was a demi-god, worthy of admiration and statues. Cæsar himself arose. He and Tigellinus, hearing of the strength of this man, had purposely prepared the spectacle, and laughing to each other, had said: "Let the slayer of Croto vanquish the bull chosen by us." But now they looked with amazement at the picture before them, hardly believing that it could be real. There were some of the spectators who had raised their arms, and remained in this attitude. Sweat poured down the faces of others, as if they themselves were struggling with the animal. In the circus nothing was heard save the hiss of the flames in the lamps, and the crackle of the torches. Words died in the throats of the spectators, but their hearts beat against their breasts as if to split them. It seemed to all that the struggle was lasting for ages.

But the man and the brute continued motionless in their terrible struggle. They seemed rooted in the earth.

Suddenly there reverberated through the arena a muffled roar, and then a shout arose from the spectators, and then again silence fell. The people saw as in a dream that the monstrous head of the bull was twisting around in the iron grasp of the barbarian. The Lygian's face, neck, and arms grew purple; his back curved still more. He was evidently rallying the rest of his superhuman strength. But he could not stand the strain much longer.

Gradually the groans of the bull grew hoarser and duller and more painful as they mingled with the whistling breath of the giant. The

head of the brute was twisted more and more. A long foaming tongue protruded from its muzzle. Next instant the crack of breaking bones reached the ears of the nearest spectators; then the beast sunk to the earth with a broken neck.

In a twinkling the giant slipped the cords from the horns of the bull, and, panting, raised the maiden in his arms. His face had paled, his hair was matted with sweat, his arms and shoulders were wet as though with water. For a moment he stood as if he were scarce conscious, then he lifted his eyes and gazed around the amphitheatre.

The immense audience had gone wild. The walls of the building trembled from the shouts of tens of thousands of spectators. Since the beginning of the games no such enthusiasm had ever been known. Those who occupied the higher tiers left them, and crowded down the aisles between the seats, in order to get a better view of the athlete. From all sides came cries for mercy, passionate and insistent, which soon turned into one fierce roar. The giant was now the darling of the people, who, above all things, worshipped physical strength; for the time he was the greatest personage in Rome.

The Lygian understood that the mob were demanding his pardon and freedom, but his thoughts were not upon himself alone. For a time he looked about him, then he approached the imperial seat, and, holding the maiden on his outstretched arms, he raised his eyes in supplication, as if to say: "Take pity on her! Save her! For her sake this has been done."

The spectators understood his desire. The sight of the fainting girl, a mere child in comparison with the gigantic Lygian, had its effect upon the crowd and the soldiers and Senators. That slender figure, white as if cut from alabaster, her swooning condition, the awful peril from which the giant had rescued her, and finally her beauty, moved every heart. Some thought that the Lygian was a father begging mercy for his child. Pity burst forth like a flame. Enough of blood and death and tortures! On every side arose entreaties for mercy from voices broken by sobs.

Ursus, still carrying the girl in his arms, moved around the arena, and, by eye and gesture, begged mercy for the girl. Then Vinitius started up from his seat, leaped over the barrier which separated the front seats from the arena, and running to Lygia, threw his toga over her naked body. Then he rent the tunic on his breast, and exposed the scars of wounds received in the Armenian war, and stretched his arms out towards the people.

The enthusiasm of the crowd now passed all bounds. The mob stamped and howled. Voices demanding mercy grew terrible in their insistence. People not only took the part of the athlete, but rose in defence of the maiden and the soldier. With flashing eyes and clenched fists thousands of spectators turned towards Cæsar. He, however, demurred and hesitated. He cherished no hatred for Vinitius, nor did he particularly desire the death of Lygia, yet it would have given him pleasure to see the body of the girl torn by the horns of the bull, or the tusks of beasts. His cruelty and his degenerate disposition found a strange delight in such sights. And now the people wished to deprive him of one. This thought angered him. Wrath burned red on his bloated face. His self-love made it hard for him to yield to the will of the people. On the other hand, his cowardice prevented him from opposing it.

He looked around among the Augustales to see if he could discover thumbs pointing downwards to give the verdict of death. But Petronius held up his hand, and looked almost defiantly in Cæsar's face. Vestinius, superstitious yet enthusiastic, who feared ghosts, but not the living, also gave the sign for mercy. So did Scevinus the Senator, and Nerva, and Tullius Senecio, and the famous warrior, Ostorius Scapula, and Antistius, and Piso Vetus, and Crispinus, and Minucius Thermus, and Pontius Telesinus, and, most important of all, Thræsea, who was adored by the people.

In view of this opposition, Cæsar dropped the emerald from his eye with an expression of scornful indignation. Tigellinus, who wished to spite Petronius, bent over him and said: "Yield not, O Divine one! we have the pretorians at our command."

Nero turned to the place where Subrius Flavius stood, in command over the pretorians. He saw something which he little expected. The face of the old Tribune, hitherto always devoted to him, was now set and stern, although bathed with tears, and his hand was raised in sign of mercy.

Meantime the masses had become enraged. Clouds of dust rose from beneath the stamping feet, and filled the amphitheatre. Mingled with the shouts were heard cries: "Ahenobarbus! matricide! incendiary!"

Nero became frightened. In the circus the people were masters of the situation. Former Cæsars, and especially Caligula, had ventured sometimes to withstand the popular will, and the consequent disturbances sometimes ended in bloodshed. Nero's position was differ-

ent. Not only as a comedian and a singer did he need the favour of the people, but also as a bulwark against the Senate and the Patricians. Since the burning of Rome he had striven to win it by all means, and so had turned the anger of the people against the Christians. He understood that further opposition would be perilous. A riot begun in the circus might spread over the city, and produce incalculable results.

Once more he looked at Subrius Flavius, at Scevinus, the centurion, a kinsman of the Senator, at the soldiers; and, seeing everywhere knitted brows, and stern eyes fixed upon him, he gave the sign for mercy. Then thunders of applause burst out and echoed from the highest to the lowest seats. The people were now assured of the safety of the condemned ones. From this moment they passed under their protection. Cæsar himself would not dare to molest them further.

A MONSTER UNLASHED

(FROM VICTOR HUGO'S "1793")

A war sloop attached to the English Fleet, left Jersey one evening manned by a French crew and with a masked battery on the lower deck. There was an air of suspicion about her which was added to by the presence on board of a stranger, clothed as a peasant, but addressed by the Governor of the island as "General" and "My Cousin." He was known to the crew only as "The Peasant." The sloop made for the French coast, and at about ten o'clock, with a heavy sea running, the captain and chief gunner who were talking on deck heard a desperate and awful cry from below. They tried to descend to the lower deck but were prevented by the crew scrambling up in frantic haste. A gun had broken loose and its epic contest with the crew is given here in the translation.

ONE of the carronades ¹ of the battery, a 24 pdr., had got loose. This is one of the most terrifying catastrophies that can occur in mid-ocean. Nothing more formidable and frightful can face a vessel of war in open sea and under full canvas.

A cannon which snaps its moorings becomes abruptly and inconceivably a live and superhuman animal. It is a machine transformed into a monster. This mass rushes along upon its wheels with the ready movements of a billiard ball, it glides forward or back as the ship rolls, plunges with the pitching, comes, goes, halts, appears to meditate, then starts off again. Darts like an arrow from one end of the ship to another, pirouettes round, withdraws, then escapes, rears up, hurtles on, crashes, kills, exterminates. It becomes a battering ram driving capriciously against a wall, only the battering ram is made of iron and the wall of wood. It is the leap into liberty of imprisoned matter; it is almost as if some slave doomed to eternal subjection was paying out past scores: or as if evil lurked in what we call inert objects and exploded suddenly; or lost patience and wished

¹ A ship's cannon. So called because originally made at Carron in Scotland.

to wreak some abominable vengeance. There is nothing like the fury of the inanimate for sullen hatred.

This mad piece of armament could leap like a panther, with the weight of the elephant, the agility of a mouse, the stubbornness of an axe-blow, the unexpectedness of the sea swell, the speed of lightning, the deafness and indifference of the tomb. It weighs 10,000 lb. and yet can skip like a child's marble. It makes wide circles and curvets which are cut off at right angles. And what can one do? How stop the abomination? A tempest can cease, a cyclone will pass over, a wind will fall, a broken mast be replaced, a stream of water can be stopped, a fire can be put out; but what can be done with this vast beast of bronze? How is it to be approached and placated? You can reason with a dog, astonish a bull, fascinate a boa constrictor, terrify a tiger, mollify a lion; but every ingenuity seems wasted upon that portent, a released cannon. You cannot kill it, it is dead. And yet at the same time it lives. It lives with a vitality infinite in its malignance.

Beneath it, first of all, is the solid flooring upon which at any rate it can keep its balance. It is just set in motion by the ship, which is set in motion by the sea, which is set in motion by the wind. This exterminator is a toy. The ship, the floods, the breezes, they all join in encouraging it; it draws its terrifying existence from them. What can be done with such an engrenage? How grapple with this monstrous mechanism (or medium) of shipwreck? Who could foresee its comings and goings, now the holding back, next the stoppages, and then the clashes? Any one of such blows against the ship's side may stave it in. How can one anticipate these appalling vagaries? and you are dealing with a projectile which seems to have ideas and which changes its direction every instant. How in fact can one stop what one must avoid? The abominable cannon hurls itself about, advances, retires, strikes to right and left, flees, escapes, baffles, breaks down obstacles, crushes men like flies. The primal horror of the situation lies in the mobility of the flooring upon which it moves. The ship has in its belly imprisoned lightning which seeks to escape. It is like thunder rolling across an earthquake.

In a second the entire crew was afoot. The mistake was the chief gunner's, who had failed to tighten the screw nut of the mooring chain and who had wrongly shackled the four wheels of the gun, allowing the sole and frame enough play to put the two platforms out of truth and so to dislocate the breeching. The cordage had broken

so that the cannon was no longer firm upon its carriage. The stationary breech to prevent recoil was not in use at this time. A sea had broken in upon the port side, and the gun, being badly moored, had recoiled and broken her chain and thus was launched upon her terrifying pilgrimage amidships.

Just imagine, in order to understand this strange gliding, a drop of water running across a window.

At the moment when the lashings broke, the gunners were in the battery. Some were grouped together, others were scattered. All were engaged in one or other of those many duties of the sea which occupy seamen who wish to be ready for any possible rough and tumble. The gun let loose by the pitching of the vessel punched a great gap in this group of men, smashing four at the first impact. Then seized and released anew by the rolling of the ship, it cut a fifth seaman in two, and hurling itself against the starboard side it completely broke up a battery. That was the cry of horror which arose. Every man hurled himself at the ship's ladder. The lower deck emptied in a second.

The huge machine had been abandoned. She was left to her own free will. She was her own mistress, mistress indeed of the ship. She could do just what she wished. The entire crew, accustomed to laugh at battle, were trembling now. It would be impossible to reproduce their sense of horror.

The Captain and the Lieutenant, nevertheless, both intrepid men, had stopped at the top of the stairway silent, pale, and hesitating. They gazed upon the lower deck. Somebody elbowed them out of the way and went down.

It was their passenger, the peasant, the man of whom they had been speaking a moment before. Once at the bottom of the ladder he stopped.

The gun was running to and fro in the lower deck. The ship's lamp, oscillating from the timbers of the battery, lent to this spectacle a giddy change of light and shade. The cannon lost shape in the speed of its flight and seemed to become at one moment black in the light, at the next to be reflecting vague pallors in the dark.

It continued its destruction of the ship. It had already smashed four other guns and made two holes in the ship's side, luckily above the water line, but through which the water could come if a squall arose. It reared itself insanely against the framework of the vessel. The tie beams, which are proverbially strong, resisted, such is the

solidity of their curved woodwork; but you could hear them crack beneath the buffets of this mad mallet striking with incredible ubiquity in every direction at once. A ball of lead shaken in a bottle has not imparted to it swifter or harder percussions. The four wheels crossed and re-crossed the dead men, cutting them into pieces and ribbons, and turning the five carcasses into twenty stumps which rolled up and down the battery. The dead heads seemed to cry aloud; and threads of blood wriggled across the floor with the rolling and pitching. The ceiling, broken in many a place, began to gape. The whole ship was filled with a hideous clamour.

The Captain soon regained his calm and at his command the men hurled through the hatchway between decks anything which could deaden and check the insane race of the cannon; mattresses, hammocks, spare sails, coils of rope, the baggage of passengers and the bundles of false assignats of which the sloop had quite a number, since this English infamy was looked upon as fair play in war. But what could these rags achieve when no one dared descend and arrange them as required? In a few moments they had been turned to lint.

There was just enough sea to make the accident as complete as possible. Even a tempest would have been welcome; it might have upset the cannon, and the moment its four wheels were in the air it could have been mastered.

Meanwhile the destruction grew; there were great gashes and even cracks in the masts which, being embedded in the framework of the keel, ran through the decks of the ship like round pillars. Under the convulsive blows of the cannon, the foremast was split and even the mainmast was damaged. The battery was breaking up, six guns out of thirty were out of action and the breaches in the ship's side multiplied and the sloop began to leak.

The old passenger who had gone down amidships seemed turned to marble at the bottom of the stairway. He gazed stricken upon the scene of devastation. He did not move. It seemed impossible for anyone to take a single step in the battery.

Each movement of the gun when it was free threatened to sink the vessel. A few such lurches and shipwreck was inevitable.

Either perish now, or arrest the havoc forthwith; do something; but how!

What an enemy this gun was!

The point was just to stop the crazy creature. The lightning flash had to be controlled; this thunder must be vanquished.

The Captain said to the Lieutenant:

"Do you believe in God, my friend?"

The Lieutenant answered: "Yes. No. Sometimes."

"During the tempest?"

"Yes; and in moments like this."

"Only God can pull us out of a hole like this," said the Captain.

All were silent, letting the gun continue its abominable row.

Outside, the water struck the ship, answering the blows of the cannon with blows of the sea. It was like alternate hammers.

Suddenly, into this inaccessible circus where the escaped cannon curvetted and pranced, a man appeared with a bar of iron in his hand. He was the author of the catastrophe, the chief gunner who was guilty of negligence and the cause of the accident, the master of the carronade. Having created the trouble he wished to repair it. He had seized a handspike in one hand and some tackle with a running noose in the other and he leapt through the hatchway into the lower deck.

Then a savage tussle began; a titanic combat of cannon and cannoneer, the battle of matter with intelligence; the duel between inanimate and animate.

The man had placed himself at an angle of the wall where, gripping bar and rope in both fists, he could lean back against the ties, firmly planted upon legs of iron, and wait, livid, calm and tragic, as if rooted to the floor. He waited for the cannon to pass near him.

The gunner knew his gun and it seemed to him that it must know this. For a long time they had lived together. How often had he thrust his hand down its throat; it was his tame beast; he began to talk to it like a dog.

"Come," he said. Perhaps he liked it.

He seemed to wish it to come to him. But to come to him might mean to come upon him, and in that event he was lost. How could he avoid being crushed to death—that was the question. All were looking on terrified. Not a single chest breathed easily, except perhaps that of the old man who was alone in the lower deck with the two combatants—a sinister witness. He could himself be mashed to pulp at any moment. He did not move.

Beneath them the waters blindly directed the struggle.

At the very moment when, having decided to take on this death grapple, the gunner proceeded to provoke the cannon, there came a chance adjustment of the sea which allowed the gun to remain a moment motionless, as if stupefied.

"Come on," said the man.

It seemed to hearken.

Suddenly it leapt upon him. The man avoided the shock.

Then the fight began—a fight incredible. The fragile pitting itself against the invulnerable. The thing of flesh attacking the beast of iron. Upon one side force, upon the other a soul.

All this took place in twilight. It was like the indistinct premonition of an omen.

A soul! How strange! You would have said that the cannon had one also, but one of hatred and revenge. Its very blindness seemed to have eyes. The monster surely was watching the man; at any rate there was cunning in its bulk. It too was biding its chance; like some gigantic metal insect possessing or seeming to possess demoniac will-power. At moments this colossal grasshopper struck the low roof of the battery, then it fell back on its four wheels like a tiger on its four paws and resumed its pursuit of the man; he, supple, agile, adroit, squirmed like a lizard beneath these lightning dartings. He avoided actual encounter; but the blows he escaped fell upon the ship and continued the process of demolition.

An end of broken chain had remained fastened to the gun. This chain had become entangled in some mysterious way round the screw of the breech button. One end of the chain was fastened to the carriage; the other, free, gyrated insanely about the gun exaggerating its antics.

The screw already held it like a vice, and this chain, reinforcing the bludgeon-blows of the battering ram with its lashes of a lanyard, created a wild whirling around and with the cannon—a whip of iron in a fist of brass. This chain was an added complication to the confused tumult.

Yet the man fought on. Even at times it was the man who attacked. He crawled along the side, his bar and rope ready; and the gun seemed to know and, as if suspecting a trap, had slunk off. The man pursued it inexorably.

Such things cannot last long. The cannon seemed to say to itself suddenly: "Come, an end to this," and it paused. The approach of the climax could be felt. The cannon, as if in suspense, seemed to possess ferocious premeditation. Abruptly it hurled itself upon the gunner. He stepped aside, let it pass, and cried out to it laughing, "Try again!"

The gun, as if furious, broke a carronade to larboard, then swept

off and flung itself upon the man, who escaped. Three carronades foundered under the charge; then as if blind and no longer knowing what it was up to, it turned its back on the man, rolled from stern to bow smashing the entrave and making a breach in the walls of the fore-peak. The gunner had taken refuge at the foot of the ladder, a few steps from the watching stranger. He held his handspike ready. The cannon seemed to notice this and without troubling to turn round, it backed upon him like the lightning blow from an axe. Once caught against the side the gunner was lost. The crew gave a great cry together.

But the old passenger, hitherto motionless, had hurled himself with a rapidity that outdid all the velocity of the fight which he watched. He seized a bundle of false assignats and at the risk of being crushed, he managed to fling it between the wheels of the carronade. This decisive and perilous action could not have been achieved with greater certainty and precision by an expert broken to the usages laid down in the "Handbook for manœuvres of a gunner at sea." The bundle had the effect of a plug. A pebble can stop a log, a branch will deflect an avalanche. The gun stumbled. The gunner, seizing this supreme opportunity, drove his bar of iron between the spokes of one of the rear wheels. The cannon stopped. It hung poised. The man using his bar as a lever made the gun rock; the inert mass turned over with the crash of a collapsing bell and the gunner, streaming with sweat, hurled himself agonizedly upon it, and ran the running knot of the lanyard round the bronzed neck of the floored monster.

It was over. The man had won. The ants had overcome the mastodon; the pigmy had made the thunder prisoner.

The soldiers and sailors cheered wildly.

The crew then flung themselves with cables and chains upon the gun and in an instant it was moored.

The gunner saluted the passenger.

"Sir," he said, "you have saved my life."

The old man had resumed his impassive attitude and did not answer.

THE FIGHT ON THE LAKE

(FROM "THE DEERSLAYER," BY FENIMORE COOPER)

"Floating Tom" Hutter has made his home on an artificial island of piles on Lake Glimmerglass, to be out of danger from the Indians. Hutter, with the young hunter "Hurry" March and two friendly Indians, return to the house in their covered boat or "ark," and Hutter and Hurry land and enter.

As the canoe of Hutter passed through the gate into the dock, he thought that he might defend his position against any garrison in the castle, for a sufficient time, could he but have had the helping arm of his friend Deerslayer. As it was, he felt comparatively secure, and no longer suffered the keen apprehensions he had lately experienced in behalf of Hist.

A single shove sent the canoe from the gate, to the trap beneath the castle. Here Hutter found all fast, neither padlock, nor chain, nor bar having been molested. The key was produced, the locks removed, the chain loosened, and the trap pushed upward. Hurry now thrust his head in at the opening; the arms followed, and the colossal legs rose without any apparent effort. At the next instant, his heavy foot was heard stamping in the passage above; that which separated the chambers of the father and daughters and into which the trap opened. He then gave a shout of triumph.

"Come on, Old Tom," the reckless woodsman called out from within the building—"here's your tenement safe and sound; ay, and as empty as a nut that has passed half an hour in the paws of a squirrel! The Delaware brags of being able to *see* silence; let him come here, and he may *feel* it, in the bargain."

"Any silence where you are, Hurry Harry," returned Hutter, thrusting his head in at the hole, as he uttered the last word, which instantly caused his voice to sound smothered to those without—"any silence where you are, ought to be both seen and felt, for it's unlike any other silence."

"Come, come—old fellow; hoist yourself up, and we'll open doors and windows and let in the fresh air to brighten up matters. Few words in troublesome times, make men the best friends. Your darter Judith is what I call a misbehaving young woman, and the hold of the whole family on me is so much weakened by her late conduct, that it wouldn't take a speech as long as the ten commandments to send me off to the river, leaving you and your traps, your ark and your children, your man-servants and your maid-servants, your oxen and your asses, to fight this battle with the Iroquois by yourselves. Open that window, Floating Tom, and I'll blunder through, and do the same job to the front door."

A moment of silence succeeded, and a noise like that produced by the fall of a heavy body followed. A deep execration from Hurry succeeded, and then the whole interior of the building seemed alive. The noises that now so suddenly, and we may add so unexpectedly, even to the Delaware, broke the stillness within, could not be mistaken. They resembled those that would be produced by a struggle between tigers in a cage. Once or twice the Indian yell was given, but it seemed smothered, and as if it proceeded from exhausted or compressed throats; and, in a single instance, a deep and another shockingly revolting execration came from the throat of Hurry. It appeared as if bodies were constantly thrown upon the floor with violence, as often rising to renew the struggle. Chingachgook felt greatly at a loss what to do. He had all the arms in the ark, Hutter and Hurry having proceeded without their rifles; but there was no means of using them, or of passing them to the hands of their owners. The combatants were literally caged, rendering it almost as impossible, under the circumstances, to get out, as to get into the building. Then there was Hist to embarrass his movements, and to cripple his efforts. With a view to relieve himself from this disadvantage, he told the girl to take the remaining canoe, and to join Hutter's daughters, who were incautiously but deliberately approaching, in order to save herself, and to warn the others of their danger. But the girl positively and firmly refused to comply. At that moment, no human power, short of an exercise of superior physical force, could have induced her to quit the ark. The exigency of the moment did not admit of delay, and the Delaware seeing no possibility of serving his friends, cut the line and by a strong shove forced the scow some twenty feet clear of the piles. Here he took the sweeps and succeeded in getting a short distance to windward, if any direction could be thus termed in so light

an air, but neither the time, nor his skill at the oars, allowed this distance to be great. When he ceased rowing, the ark might have been a hundred yards from the platform, and half that distance to the southward of it, the sail being lowered. Judith and Hetty had now discovered that something was wrong, and were stationary a thousand feet farther north.

All this while the furious struggle continued within the house. In scenes like these, events thicken in less time than they can be related. From the moment when the first fall was heard within the building, to that when the Delaware ceased his awkward attempts to row, it might have been three or four minutes, but it had evidently served to weaken the combatants. The oaths and execrations of Hurry were no longer heard, and even the struggles had lost some of their force and fury; nevertheless, they still continued with unabated perseverance. At this instant, the door flew open, and the fight was transferred to the platform, the light and the open air.

A Huron had undone the fastenings of the door, and three or four of his tribe rushed after him upon the narrow space, as if glad to escape from some terrible scene within. The body of another followed, pitched headlong through the door with terrific violence. Then March appeared, raging like a lion at bay, and for an instant freed from his numerous enemies. Hutter was already a captive and bound. There was now a pause in the struggle, which resembled a lull in a tempest. The necessity of breathing was common to all, and the combatants stood watching each other, like mastiffs that have been driven from their holds, and are waiting for a favourable opportunity of renewing them. We shall profit by this pause, to relate the manner in which the Indians had obtained possession of the castle; and this the more willingly, because it may be necessary to explain to the reader why a conflict which had been so close and fierce, should have also been so comparatively bloodless.

Rivenoak and his companion, particularly the latter, who had appeared to be a subordinate and occupied solely with his raft, had made the closest observations in their visits to the castle; even the boy had brought away minute and valuable information. By these means, the Hurons had obtained a general idea of the manner in which the place was constructed and secured, as well as details that enabled them to act intelligently in the dark. Notwithstanding the care that Hutter had taken to drop the ark on the east side of the building when he was in the act of transferring the furniture from the former to the

latter, he had been watched in a way to render the precaution useless. Scouts were on the look-out on the eastern, as well as on the western shore of the lake, and the whole proceeding had been noted. As soon as it was dark, rafts like that already described, approached from both shores to reconnoitre; and the ark had passed within fifty feet of one of them, without its being discovered; the men it held lying at their length on the logs, so as to blend themselves and their slow-moving machine with the water. When these two sets of adventurers drew near the castle, they encountered each other, and after communicating their respective observations, they unhesitatingly approached the building. As had been expected, it was found empty. The rafts were immediately sent for a reinforcement to the shore, and two of the savages remained to profit by their situation. These men succeeded in getting on the roof, and, by removing some of the bark, in entering what might be termed the garret. Here they were found by their companions. Hatchets now opened a hole through the square logs of the upper floor, through which no less than eight of the most athletic of the Indians dropped into the room beneath. Here they were left, well supplied with arms and provisions, either to stand a siege, or to make a sortie, as the case might require. The night was passed in sleep, as is usual with Indians in a state of activity. The returning day brought them a view of the approach of the ark, through the loops, the only manner in which light and air were now admitted, the windows being closed most effectually with plank, rudely fashioned to fit. As soon as it was ascertained that the two white men were about to enter by the trap, the chief who directed the proceedings of the Hurons took his measures accordingly. He removed all the arms from his own people, even to the knives, in distrust of savage ferocity, when awakened by personal injuries, and he hid them where they could not be found without a search. Ropes of bark were then prepared, and taking their stations in the three different rooms, they all waited for the signal to fall upon their intended captives. As soon as the party had entered the building, men without replaced the bark of the roof, removed every sign of their visit with care, and then departed for the shore. It was one of these who had dropped his moccasin, which he had not been able to find again in the dark. Had the death of the girl been known, it is probable nothing could have saved the lives of Hurry and Hutter; but that event occurred after the ambush was laid, and at a distance of several miles from the encampment near the castle.

Accustomed to the rude sports of wrestling and jumping, then so common in America, more especially on the frontiers, Hurry possessed an advantage, in addition to his prodigious strength, that had rendered the struggle less unequal than it might otherwise appear to be. This alone had enabled him to hold out so long against so many enemies; for the Indian is by no means remarkable for his skill or force in athletic exercises. As yet, no one had been seriously hurt, though several of the savages had received severe falls; and he, in particular, who had been thrown bodily upon the platform, might be said to be temporarily *hors de combat*. Some of the rest were limping; and March himself had not entirely escaped from bruises, though want of breath was the principal loss that both sides wished to repair.

Under circumstances like those in which the parties were placed, a truce, let it come from what cause it might, could not well be of long continuance. The arena was too confined, and the distrust of treachery too great to admit of this. Contrary to what might be expected in his situation, Hurry was the first to recommence hostilities. Whether this proceeded from policy, or an idea that he might gain some advantage by making a sudden and unexpected assault, or was the fruit of irritation and his undying hatred of an Indian, it is impossible to say. His onset was furious, however, and at first it carried all before it. He seized the nearest Huron by the waist, raised him entirely from the platform, and hurled him into the water, as if he had been a child. In half a minute, two more were at his side, one of whom received a grave injury by falling on the friend who had just preceded him. But four enemies remained, and, in a hand-to-hand conflict in which no arms were used but those which nature had furnished, Hurry believed himself fully able to cope with that number of red-skins.

"Hurrah! Old Tom," he shouted; "the rascals are taking to the lake, and I'll soon have 'em all swimming!" As these words were uttered, a violent kick in the face sent back the injured Indian, who had caught at the edge of the platform and was endeavouring to raise himself to its level, helplessly and hopelessly into the water. When the affray was over, his dark body was seen through the limpid elements of the Glimmerglass, lying with outstretched arms, extended on the bottom of the shoal on which the castle stood, clinging to the sands and weeds as if life were to be retained by this frenzied grasp of death. A blow sent into the pit of another's stomach doubled him up like a worm that had been trodden on; and but two able-

bodied foes remained to be dealt with. One of these, however, was not only the largest and strongest of the Hurons, but he was also the most experienced of the warriors present, and that one whose sinews were the best strung in fights and by marches on the war-path. This man had fully appreciated the gigantic strength of his opponent, and had carefully husbanded his own. He was also equipped in the best manner for such a conflict, standing in nothing but his breech-cloth, the model of a naked and beautiful statue of agility and strength. To grasp him required additional dexterity and unusual strength. Still, Hurry did not hesitate; but the kick that had actually destroyed one fellow-creature, was no sooner given than he closed in with this formidable antagonist, endeavouring to force him into the water also. The struggle that succeeded was truly frightful. So fierce did it immediately become, and so quick and changeful were the evolutions of the athletæ, that the remaining savage had no chance for interfering, had he possessed the desire, but wonder and apprehension held him spell-bound. He was an inexperienced youth, and his blood curdled as he witnessed the fell strife of human passions, exhibited too in an unaccustomed form.

Hurry first attempted to throw his antagonist. With this view he seized him by the throat and an arm, and tripped with the quickness and force of an American borderer. The effect was frustrated by the agile movements of the Huron, who had clothes to grasp by, and whose feet avoided the attempt with a nimbleness equal to that with which it was made. Then followed a sort of *mêlée*, if such a term can be applied to a struggle between two, in which no efforts were distinctly visible, the limbs and bodies of the combatants assuming so many attitudes and contortions as to defeat observation. This confused but fierce rally lasted less than a minute, however, when Hurry, furious at having his strength baffled by the agility and nakedness of his foe, made a desperate effort, which sent the Huron from him, hurling his body violently against the logs of the hut. The concussion was so great as momentarily to confuse the latter's faculties. The pain too extorted a deep groan; an unusual concession to agony, to escape a red man in the heat of battle. Still he rushed forward again to meet his enemy, conscious that his safety rested on his resolution. Hurry now seized the other by the waist, raised him bodily from the platform, and fell with his own great weight on the body beneath. This additional shock so far stunned the sufferer, that his gigantic white opponent now had him completely at his mercy. Passing his hands round

the throat of his victim, he compressed them with the strength of a vice, fairly doubling the head of the Huron over the edge of the platform until the chin was uppermost with the infernal strength he expended. An instant sufficed to show the consequences. The eyes of the sufferer seemed to start forward, his tongue protruded, and his nostrils dilated nearly to splitting. At this instant a rope of bark, having an eye, was passed dexterously within the two arms of Hurry; the end threaded the eye, forming a noose, and his elbows were drawn together behind his back, with a power that all his gigantic strength could not resist. Reluctantly, even under such circumstances, did the exasperated borderer see his hands drawn from their deadly grasp, for all the evil passions were then in the ascendant. Almost at the same instant, a similar fastening secured his ankles, and his body was rolled to the centre of the platform as helplessly, and as cavalierly, as if it were a log of wood. His rescued antagonist, however, did not rise, for while he began again to breathe, his head still hung helplessly over the edge of the logs, and it was thought at first that his neck was dislocated. He recovered gradually only, and it was hours before he could walk. Some fancied that neither his body nor his mind ever totally recovered from this near approach to death.

Hurry owed his defeat and capture to the intensity with which he had concentrated all his powers on his fallen foe. While thus occupied, the two Indians he had hurled into the water mounted to the heads of the piles, along which they passed, and joined their companion on the platform. The latter had so far rallied his faculties as to have gotten the ropes, which were in readiness for use as the others appeared, and they were applied in the manner related, as Hurry lay pressing his enemy down with his whole weight, intent only on the horrible office of strangling him. Thus were the tables turned in a single moment; he who had been so near achieving a victory that would have been renowned for ages, by means of tradition, throughout all that region, lying helpless, bound, and a captive. So fearful had been the efforts of the pale-face, and so prodigious the strength he exhibited, that even as he lay, tethered like a sheep before them, they regarded him with respect, and not without dread. The helpless body of their stoutest warrior was still stretched on the platform; and, as they cast their eyes towards the lake, in quest of the comrade that had been hurled into it so unceremoniously, and of whom they had lost sight in the confusion of the fray, they perceived his lifeless form clinging to the grass on the bottom, as already described. These several cir-

cumstances contributed to render the victory of the Hurons almost as astounding to themselves as a defeat.

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The situation of the parties was now so singular as to merit a particular description. The ark was within sixty yards of the castle, a little to the southward or to windward of it, with its sail full, and the steering-oar abandoned. The latter, fortunately, was loose, so that it produced no great influence on the crab-like movement of the unwieldy craft. The sail being set, as sailors term it, flying, or having no braces, the air forced the yard forward, though both sheets were fast. The effect was threefold on a boat with a bottom that was perfectly flat, and which drew merely some three or four inches of water. It pressed the head slowly round to leeward, it forced the whole fabric bodily in the same direction at the same time, and the water that unavoidably gathered under the lee, gave the scow also a forward movement. All these changes were exceedingly slow, however, for the wind was not only light, but it was baffling, as usual, and twice or thrice the sail shook. Once it was absolutely taken aback.

Had there been any keel to the ark, it would inevitably have run foul of the platform, bows on, when it is probable nothing could have prevented the Hurons from carrying it; more particularly as the sail would have enabled them to approach under cover. As it was, the scow wore slowly round, barely clearing that part of the building. The piles projecting several feet, *they* were not cleared, but the head of the slow-moving craft caught between two of them by one of its square corners, and hung. At this moment the Delaware was vigilantly watching through a loop for an opportunity to fire, while the Hurons kept within the building, similarly occupied. The exhausted warrior reclined against the hut, there having been no time to remove him, and Hurry lay almost as helpless as a log, tethered like a sheep on its way to the slaughter, near the middle of the platform. Chingachgook could have slain the first at any moment, but still his scalp would have been safe, and the young chief disdained to strike a blow that could lead to neither honour nor advantage.

"Run out one of the poles, Serpent, if Serpent you be," said Hurry, amid the groans that the tightness of the ligatures were beginning to extort from him—"run out one of the poles, and shove the head of the scow off, and you'll drift clear of us—and when you've done that good turn for *yourself*, just finish this gagging blackguard for *me*."

The appeal of Hurry, however, had no other effect than to draw the attention of Hist to his situation. This quick-witted creature comprehended it at a glance. His ankles were bound with several turns of stout, bark rope, and his arms, above the elbows, were similarly secured behind his back, barely leaving him a little play of the hands and wrists. Putting her mouth near a loop, she said in a low but distinct voice—

“Why you don’t roll here, and fall in scow? Chingachgook shoot Huron if he chase!”

“By the Lord, gal, that’s a judgmatical thought, and it shall be tried, if the starn of your scow will come a little nearer. Put a bed at the bottom for me to fall on.”

This was said at a happy moment, for tired of waiting, all the Indians made a rapid discharge of their rifles almost simultaneously, injuring no one, though several bullets passed through the loops. Hist had heard part of Hurry’s words, but most of what he said was lost in the sharp reports of the fire-arms. She undid the bar of the door that led to the stern of the scow, but did not dare to expose her person. All this time the head of the ark hung, but by a gradually decreasing hold, as the other end swung slowly round, nearer and nearer to the platform. Hurry, who now lay with his face towards the ark, occasionally writhing and turning over like one in pain, evolutions he had performed ever since he was secured, was watching every change, and at last he saw that the whole vessel was free, and was beginning to grate slowly along the sides of the piles. The attempt was desperate, but it seemed the only chance for escaping torture and death, and it suited the reckless daring of the man’s character. Waiting to the last moment, in order that the stern of the scow might fairly rub against the platform, he began to writhe again, as if in intolerable suffering, execrating all Indians in general, and the Hurons in particular, and then he suddenly and rapidly rolled over and over, taking the direction of the stern of the scow. Unfortunately, Hurry’s shoulders required more space to revolve in than his feet, and by the time he reached the edge of the platform, his direction had so far changed as to carry him clear of the ark altogether; and the rapidity of his revolutions, and the emergency admitting of no delay, he fell into the water. At this instant, Chingachgook, by an understanding with his betrothed, drew the fire of the Hurons again, not a man of whom saw the manner in which one, whom they knew to be effectually tethered, had disappeared. But Hist’s feelings were strongly interested in the success

of so bold a scheme, and she watched the movements of Hurry as the cat watches the mouse. The moment he was in motion, she foresaw the consequences, and this the more readily, as the scow was now beginning to move with some steadiness, and she bethought her of the means of saving him. With a sort of instinctive readiness, she opened the door at the very moment the rifles were ringing in her ears, and protected by the intervening cabin, she stepped into the stern of the scow in time to witness the fall of Hurry into the lake. Her foot was unconsciously placed on the end of one of the sheets of the sail, which was fastened aft, and catching up all the spare rope, with the awkwardness, but also with the generous resolution of a woman, she threw it in the direction of the helpless Hurry. The line fell on the head and body of the sinking man, and he not only succeeded in grasping separate parts of it with his hands, but he actually got a portion of it between his teeth. Hurry was an expert swimmer, and tethered as he was, he resorted to the very expedient that philosophy and reflection would have suggested. He had fallen on his back, and instead of floundering and drowning himself by desperate efforts to walk on the water, he permitted his body to sink as low as possible, and was already submerged, with the exception of his face, when the line reached him. In this situation he might possibly have remained until rescued by the Hurons, using his hands as fishes use their fins, had he received no other succour; but the movement of the ark soon tightened the rope, and of course he was dragged gently ahead, holding even pace with the scow. The motion aided in keeping his face above the surface of the water, and it would have been possible for one accustomed to endurance to have been towed a mile in this singular but simple manner.

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Chingachgook now first learned from Hist the critical condition of Hurry. To have exposed either of their persons in the stern of the scow, would have been certain death; but fortunately the sheet to which the man clung, led forward to the foot of the sail. The Delaware found means to unloosen it from the cleet aft; and Hist, who was already forward for that purpose, immediately began to pull upon the line. At this moment Hurry was towing fifty or sixty feet astern, with nothing but his face above water. As he was dragged out clear of the castle and the piles, he was first perceived by the Hurons, who raised a hideous yell, and commenced a fire on what may very

well be termed, the floating mass. It was at the same instant that Hist began to pull upon the line forward—a circumstance that probably saved Hurry's life, aided by his own self-possession and border readiness. The first bullet struck the water directly on the spot where the broad chest of the young giant was visible through the pure element, and might have pierced his heart, had the angle at which it was fired been less acute. Instead of penetrating the lake, however, it glanced from its smooth surface, rose, and actually buried itself in the logs of the cabin, near the spot at which Chingachgook had shown himself the minute before, while clearing the line from the cleet. A second, and a third, and a fourth bullet followed, all meeting with the same resistance from the surface of the water, though Hurry sensibly felt the violence of the blows they struck upon the lake so immediately above, and so near his breast. Discovering their mistake, the Hurons now changed their plan, and aimed at the uncovered face; but by this time, Hist was pulling on the line, the target advanced, and the deadly missiles still fell upon the water. In another moment the body was dragged past the end of the scow, and became concealed. As for the Delaware and Hist, they worked perfectly covered by the cabin, and in less time than it requires to tell it, they had hauled the huge frame of Hurry to the place they occupied. Chingachgook stood in readiness with his keen knife, and bending over the side of the scow, he soon severed the bark that bound the limbs of the borderer. To raise him high enough to reach the edge of the boat, and to aid him in entering, were less easy tasks, as Hurry's arms were still nearly useless; but both were done in time, when the liberated man staggered forward and fell, exhausted and helpless, into the bottom of the scow.

HOW UMSLOPOGAAS HELD THE STAIR

(FROM "ALLAN QUATERMAIN," BY RIDER HAGGARD)

Allan or "Macumazahn," with his companions Sir Henry Curtis, Captain Good, and the Zulu Umslopogaas, have penetrated at last into the unknown country of Zu-Vendis in Central Africa, and become involved in a war between the beautiful queen Nyleptha and her sister Sorais. Allan learns that there is a plot to murder the queen, and though sorely wounded, rides with Umslopogaas and gives her warning.

Now we were across, and had reached the narrow doorway through the palace wall that opened on to the mighty stair.

I looked through and stood aghast, as well I might. The door was gone, and so were the outer gates of bronze—entirely gone. They had been taken from their hinges, and, as we found afterwards, hurled from the stairway to the ground two hundred feet beneath. There in front of us was the semicircular standing-space, about twice the size of a large oval dining-table, and the ten curved black marble steps leading on to the main stair—and that was all.

We looked one at another.

"Thou seest," I said, "they have taken away the door. Is there aught with which we may fill the place? Speak quickly, for they will be on us ere the daylight." I spoke thus, because I knew that we must hold this place or none, as there were no inner doors in the palace, the rooms being separated one from another by curtains. I also knew that if we could by any means defend this doorway the murderers could get in nowhere else; for the palace is absolutely impregnable, that is, since the secret door by which Sorais had entered on that memorable night of attempted murder by Nyleptha's order had been closed up with masonry.

"I have it," said Nyleptha, who, as usual with her, rose to the emergency in a wonderful way. "On the farther side of the courtyard are blocks of cut marble—the workmen brought them there for

the bed of the new statue of Incubu, my lord; let us block the door with them."

I jumped at the idea; and having despatched one of the remaining maidens down the great stair to see if she could obtain assistance from the docks below, where her father, who was a great merchant employing many men, had his dwelling-place, and set another to watch through the doorway, we made our way back across the courtyard to where the hewn marble lay. Here we met Kara returning, having despatched the first two messengers. There were the marble blocks, sure enough, broad, massive lumps, some six inches thick, and weighing about eighty pounds each, and there, too, were a couple of implements like small stretchers, that the workmen used to carry them on. Without delay we set some of the blocks on to the stretchers, and four of the girls carried them to the doorway.

"Listen, Macumazahn," said Umslopogaas, "if these low fellows come, it is I who will hold the stair against them till the door is built. Nay, it will be a man's death: gainsay me not, old friend, for this end was foretold me by one long dead. It has been a good day, now let it be good night. See, I throw myself down to rest yonder; when their footsteps are nigh, wake thou me, not before, for I need my strength," and without a word he went outside and flung himself down on the marble, and was instantly asleep.

At this time, I too was overcome, and was forced to sit down by the doorway, and content myself with directing operations. The girls brought the blocks, while Kara and Nyleptha built them up across the six-foot-wide doorway, a triple row of them, for less would be useless. But the marble had to be brought forty yards, and then there were forty yards to run back, and though the girls laboured gloriously, even staggering along alone, each with a block in her arms, it was slow work, dreadfully slow.

The light was growing now, and presently, in the silence, we heard a commotion at the far-off bottom of the stair, and the faint clanking of armed men. As yet the wall was only two feet high, and we had been eight minutes at the building of it. So they had come. Alphonse had heard aright.

The clanking sound came nearer, and in the ghostly grey of the dawning we could make out long files of men, some fifty or so in all, slowly creeping up the stair. They were now at the half-way standing-place that rested on the great flying arch; and here, perceiving that something was going on above, to our great gain, they halted for three

or four minutes and consulted, then slowly and cautiously advanced again.

We had been nearly a quarter of an hour at the work now, and it was almost three feet high.

Then I woke Umslopogaas. The great man rose, stretched himself, and swung Inkosi-kaas¹ round his head.

"It is well," he said. "I feel as a young man once more. My strength has come back to me, ay, even as a lamp flares up before it dies. Fear not, I shall fight a good fight; the wine and the sleep have put a new heart into me.

"Macumazahn, I have dreamed a dream. I dreamed that thou and I stood together on a star, and looked down to the world, and thou wast as a spirit, Macumazahn, for light flamed through thy flesh, but I could not see what was the fashion of mine own face. The hour has come for us, old hunter. So be it: we have had our time, but I would that in it I had seen some more such fights as yesterday's.

"Let them bury me after the fashion of my people, Macumazahn, and set my eyes towards Zululand"; and he took my hand and shook it, and then turned to face the advancing foe.

Just then, to my astonishment, the Zu-Vendi officer Kara clambered over our improvised wall in his quiet, determined sort of way, and took his stand by the Zulu, unsheathing his sword as he did so.

"What, comest thou too?" laughed out the old warrior. "Welcome—a welcome to thee, brave heart! *Ow!* for the man who can die like a man; *ow!* for the death grip and the ringing of steel. *Ow!* we are ready. We whet our beaks like eagles, our spears flash in the sun; we shake our assegais, and are hungry to fight. Who comes to give greeting to the 'Chieftainess' [Inkosi-kaas]? Who would taste her kiss, whereof the fruit is death? I, the 'Woodpecker,' I, the 'Slaughterer,' I, the 'Swiftfooted'! I, Umslopogaas, holder of the axe, of the people of Amazulu, captain of the regiment of the Nkomabakosi: I, Umslopogaas, the son of the King's Tongue, the son of Makedama, I, of the royal blood of T'Chaka, I, conqueror of the Unconquered, I, the Ringed Man, I, the Wolf-man, I call to them as a buck calls, I challenge them, I await them. *Ow!* it is thou, it is thou!"

As he spake, or rather chanted, his wild war-song, the armed men, among whom in the growing light I recognized both Nasta and Agon,

¹ His battle-axe.

streamed along the stair with a rush, and one big fellow, armed with a heavy spear, dashed up the ten semicircular steps ahead of his comrades and struck at the great Zulu with a spear. Umslopogaas moved his body but not his legs, so that the blow missed him, and next instant Inkosi-kaas crashed through headpiece, hair, and skull, and the man's corpse was rattling down the steps. As he dropped, his round hippopotamus-hide shield fell from his hand on to the marble, and the Zulu stooped down and seized it, still chanting as he did so.

In another second the sturdy Kara had also slain a man, and then began a scene the like of which has not been known to me.

Up rushed the assailants, one, two, three at a time, and as fast as they came, the axe crashed and the sword swung, and down they rolled again, dead or dying. And ever as the fight thickened, the old Zulu's eyes seemed to quicken and his arm to grow stronger. He shouted out his war-cries and the names of chiefs whom he had slain, and the blows of his awful axe rained straight and true, shearing through everything they fell on. There was none of the scientific method he was so fond of about this last immortal fight of his; he had no time for it, but struck with his full strength, and at every stroke a man sank in his tracks, and went rattling down the marble steps.

They hacked and hewed at him with swords and spears, wounding him in a dozen places till he streamed red with blood; but the shield protected his head and the chain-shirt his vitals, and for minute after minute, aided by the gallant Zu-Vendi, he still held the stair.

At last Kara's sword broke, and he grappled with a foe, and they rolled down together. So he was cut to pieces, dying like the brave man that he was.

Umslopogaas never blenched or turned. "Galazi! Oh that thou wert here, my brother Galazi!" he cried, and beat down a foe, ay, and another, and another, till at last they drew back from the slippery blood-stained steps, and stared at him in amazement, thinking that he was no mortal man.

The wall of marble block was four feet six high now, and hope rose in my heart as I leaned there against it, a miserable helpless log, grinding my teeth, and watched that glorious struggle. I could do no more for I had lost my revolver in the battle.

And old Umslopogaas, he leaned too on his good axe, and, faint as he was with wounds, he mocked them, he called them "women"—the grand old warrior, standing there one against so many! And for a breathing space none would come against him, notwithstanding

Nasta's exhortations, till at last old Agon, who, to do him justice, was a brave man, mad with baffled rage, and seeing that the wall would soon be built and his plans defeated, shook the great spear he held, and rushed up the dripping steps.

"Ah, ah!" shouted the Zulu, as he recognized the priest's flowing white beard, "it is thou, old 'witch-finder!' Come on! I await thee, white 'medicine man'; come on! come on! I have sworn to slay thee, and I ever keep my faith."

On came Agon, taking him at his word, and drove the big spear with such force at Umslopogaas that it sunk right through the tough shield and pierced him in the neck. The Zulu cast down the transfixed shield, and that moment was Agon's last. For before he could free his spear and strike again, with a shout of "*There's for thee, 'Rain-maker'!*" Umslopogaas gripped Inkosi-kaas with both hands and whirled her on high and drove her right on to his venerable head. So Agon rolled down dead among the corpses of his fellow-murderers, and there was an end of him and his plots together.

Even as he fell, a great cry rose from the foot of the stair, and looking out through the portion of the doorway that was yet unclosed, we saw armed men rushing up to the rescue, and called an answer to their shouts. Then the would-be murderers who yet remained on the stairway, and amongst whom I saw several priests, turned to fly, but, having nowhere to go, were butchered as they fled. Only one man stayed, and he was the great lord Nasta, Nyleptha's suitor and the father of the plot.

For a moment the black-bearded Nasta stood with bowed face leaning on his long sword as though in despair, and then, with a dreadful shout, he too rushed up at the Zulu, and, swinging the glittering sword around his head, dealt him such a mighty blow beneath his guard that the keen steel of the heavy blade bit right through the chain armour and deep into Umslopogaas' side, for a moment paralysing him and causing him to drop his axe.

Raising the sword again, Nasta sprang forward to make an end of him, but little he knew his foe. With a shake and a yell of fury, the Zulu gathered himself together and sprang straight at Nasta's throat, as I have sometimes seen a wounded lion spring. He struck him full as his foot was on the topmost stair, and his long arms closing round him like iron bands, down they rolled together, struggling furiously. Nasta was a strong man and a desperate, but he could not match the strongest man in Zululand, sore wounded though he was,

whose strength was as the strength of a bull. In a minute the end came. I saw old Umslopogaas stagger to his feet—ay, and saw him swing up the struggling Nasta by a single gigantic effort, and with a shout of triumph hurl him straight over the parapet of the bridge, to be crushed to powder on the rocks two hundred feet below.

The succour which had been summoned by the girl who had passed down the stair before the assassins passed up was at hand, and the loud shouts which reached us from the outer gates told us that the town was also aroused, and the men awakened by the women were calling to be admitted. Some of Nyleptha's brave ladies, who in their night-shifts and with their long hair streaming down their backs, just as they had been aroused from rest, had worked so gallantly at blocking the passage through the wall, went off to admit them at the side entrance, whilst others, assisted by the rescuing party outside, pushed and pulled down the marble blocks they had placed there with so much labour.

Soon the wall was down again, and through the doorway, followed by a crowd of rescuers, staggered old Umslopogaas, an awful and, in a way, a glorious figure. The man was a mass of wounds and a glance at his wild eye told me that he was dying. The *keshta* gum-ring upon his head was severed in two places by sword-cuts, one just over the curious hole in his skull, and the blood poured down his face from the gashes. Also on the right side of his neck was a stab from a spear, inflicted by Agon; there was a deep cut on his left arm just below where the mail shirt-sleeve stopped and on the right side of his body the armour was severed by a gash six inches long, where Nasta's mighty sword had bitten through it and deep into its wearer's vitals.

On, axe in hand, he staggered, that dreadful-looking, splendid savage, and the ladies forgot to turn faint at the scene of blood, and cheered him, as well they might, but he never stayed or heeded. With outstretched arms and tottering gait he pursued his way, followed by us all, along the broad shell-strewn walk that ran through the courtyard, past the spot where the blocks of marble lay, through the round arched doorway and the thick curtains that hung within it, down the short passage and into the great hall, which was now filling with hastily-armed men, who poured through the side entrance. Straight up the hall he went, leaving behind him a track of blood on the marble pavement, till at last he reached the sacred stone, which stood in its centre. Here his strength seemed to fail him, for he stopped and leaned upon his axe. Then suddenly he lifted up his voice and cried aloud:

"I die, I die—but it was a kingly fray. Where are they who

came up the great stair? I see them not. Art thou there, Macumazahn, or art thou gone before to wait for me in the dark whither I go? The blood blinds me—the place turns round—I hear the voice of waters: Galazi calls me!”

Next, as though a new thought had struck him, he lifted the red axe and kissed the blade.

“Farewell, Inkosi-kaas,” he cried. “Nay, nay, we will go together; we cannot part, thou and I. We have lived too long one with another, thou and I. None other shall hold the Axe.

“One more stroke, only one! A good stroke! a straight stroke! a strong stroke!” and, drawing himself to his full height, with a wild heart-shaking shout, with both hands he began to whirl the axe round his head till it looked like a circle of flaming steel. Then, suddenly, with awful force he brought it down straight on to the crown of the mass of sacred stone. A shower of sparks flew up, and such was the almost superhuman strength of the blow, that the massive marble split with a rending sound into a score of pieces, whilst of Inkosi-kaas there remained but some fragments of steel and a fibrous rope of shattered horn that had been the handle.

Down with a crash on to the pavement fell the fragments of the holy stone, and down with a crash on to them, still grasping the knob of Inkosi-kaas, fell the brave old Zulu—*dead*.

THE FIGHT WITH THE OCTOPUS

(FROM "TOILERS OF THE SEA," BY VICTOR HUGO)

Gilliatt's fight with the octopus might stand as an allegory of the hero's epic struggle with the elements, even as this in turn typifies the larger struggle of humanity. Merely regarded as a piece of realistic description, it is one of the most impressive passages in literature.

When the episode begins, Gilliatt, the fisherman hero, is exploring a cave in the Douvres rocks in search of crabs.

NEAR the moulded arch, he remarked those low dark grottoes, a sort of caves within a cavern, which he had already observed from a distance. He now stood nearer to them. The entrance to the nearest to him was out of the water, and easily approachable. Nearer still than this recess he noticed, above the level of the water, and within reach of his hand, a horizontal fissure. It seemed to him probable that the crab had taken refuge there, and he plunged his hand in as far as he was able, and groped about in that dusky aperture.

Suddenly he felt himself seized by the arm. A strange indescribable horror thrilled through him.

Some living thing, thin, rough, flat, cold, slimy, had twisted itself round his naked arm in the dark depth below. It crept upward towards his chest. Its pressure was like a tightening cord, its steady persistence like that of a screw. In less than a moment some mysterious spiral form had passed round his wrist and elbow, and had reached his shoulder. A sharp point penetrated beneath the armpit.

Gilliatt recoiled; but he had scarcely power to move! He was, as it were, nailed to the place. With his left hand, which was disengaged, he seized his knife, which he still held between his teeth, and with that hand, holding the knife, he supported himself against the rocks, while he made a desperate effort to withdraw his arm. He succeeded only in disturbing his persecutor, which wound itself still tighter. It was supple as leather, strong as steel, cold as night.

A second form, sharp, elongated, and narrow, issued out of the crevice, like a tongue out of monstrous jaws. It seemed to lick his naked body. Then suddenly stretching out, it became longer and thinner, as it crept over his skin, and wound itself round him. At the same time a terrible sense of pain, comparable to nothing he had ever known, compelled all his muscles to contract. He felt upon his skin a number of flat rounded points. It seemed as if innumerable suckers had fastened to his flesh and were about to drink his blood.

A third long undulating shape issued from the hole in the rock; seemed to feel its way about his body; lashed round his ribs like a cord, and fixed itself there.

Agony when at its height is mute. Gilliatt uttered no cry. There was sufficient light for him to see the repulsive forms which had entangled themselves about him. A fourth ligature, but this one swift as an arrow, darted towards his stomach, and wound around him there.

It was impossible to sever or tear away the slimy bands which were twisted tightly round his body, and were adhering by a number of points. Each of the points was the focus of frightful and singular pangs. It was as if numberless small mouths were devouring him at the same time.

A fifth long, slimy, riband-shaped strip issued from the hole. It passed over the others, and wound itself tightly around his chest. The compression increased his sufferings. He could scarcely breathe.

These living thongs were pointed at their extremities, but broadened like a blade of a sword towards its hilt. All belonged evidently to the same centre. They crept and glided about him; he felt the strange points of pressure, which seemed to him like mouths, change their places from time to time.

Suddenly a large, round, flattened, glutinous mass issued from beneath the crevice. It was the centre; the five thongs were attached to it like spokes to the nave of a wheel. On the opposite side of this disgusting monster appeared the commencement of three other tentacles, the ends of which remained under the rock. In the middle of this slimy mass appeared two eyes.

The eyes were fixed on Gilliatt.

He recognized the Devil-Fish.

This frightful apparition, which is always possible among the rocks in the open sea, is a greyish form which undulates in the water. It is of the thickness of a man's arm, and in length nearly five feet. Its outline is ragged. Its form resembles an umbrella closed, and without handle. This irregular mass advances slowly towards you. Suddenly

it opens, and eight radii issue abruptly from around a face with two eyes. These radii are alive: their undulation is like lambent flames; they resemble, when opened, the spokes of a wheel, of four or five feet in diameter. A terrible expansion! It springs upon its prey.

The devil-fish harpoons its victim.

It winds around the sufferer, covering and entangling him in its long folds. Underneath it is yellow; above, a dull, earthy hue: nothing could render that inexplicable shade dust coloured. Its form is spider-like, but its tints are like those of the chameleon. When irritated it becomes violet. Its most horrible characteristic is its softness.

Its folds strangle, its contact paralyses.

It has an aspect like gangrened or scabrous flesh. It is a monstrous embodiment of disease.

This animal is the same as those which mariners call Poulps; which science designates *Cephaloptera*, and which ancient legends call Krakens. It is the English sailors who call them "Devil-fish," and sometimes Blood-suckers. In the Channel Islands they are called *pieuvres*.

Such was the creature in whose power Gilliatt had fallen for some minutes.

The monster was the inhabitant of the grotto; the terrible genie of the place. A kind of sombre demon of the water.

All the splendours of the cavern existed for it alone.

On the day of the previous month when Gilliatt had first penetrated into the grotto, the dark outline, vaguely perceived by him in the ripples of the secret waters, was this monster. It was here in its home.

When entering for the second time into the cavern in pursuit of the crab, he had observed the crevice in which he supposed that the crab had taken refuge, the *pieuvre* was there lying in wait for prey.

Is it possible to imagine that secret ambush?

No bird would brood, no egg would burst to life, no flower would dare to open, no breast to give milk, no heart to love, no spirit to soar, under the influence of that apparition of evil watching with sinister patience in the dusk.

Gilliatt had thrust his arm deep into the opening; the monster had snapped at it. It held him fast, as the spider holds the fly.

He was in the water up to his belt; his naked feet clutching the slippery roundness of the huge stones at the bottom; his right arm bound and rendered powerless by the flat coils of the long tentacles of the creature, and his body almost hidden under the folds and cross folds of this horrible bandage.

Of the eight arms of the devil-fish three adhered to the rock, while five encircled Gilliatt. In this way, clinging to the granite on the one hand, and with the other to its human prey, it enchained him to the rock. Two hundred and fifty suckers were upon him, tormenting him with agony and loathing. He was grasped by gigantic hands, the fingers of which were each nearly a yard long, and furnished inside with living blisters eating into the flesh.

As we have said, it is impossible to tear oneself from the folds of the devil-fish. The attempt ends only in a firmer grasp. The monster clings with more determined force. Its effort increases with that of its victim; every struggle produces a tightening of its ligatures.

Gilliatt had but one resource, his knife.

His left hand only was free; but the reader knows with what power he could use it. It might have been said that he had two right hands.

His open knife was in his hand.

The antenna of the devil-fish cannot be cut; it is a leathery substance impossible to divide with the knife, it slips under the edge; its position in attack also is such that to cut it would be to wound the victim's own flesh.

The creature is formidable, but there is a way of resisting it. The fishermen of Sark know this, as does anyone who has seen them execute certain movements in the sea. The porpoises know it also; they have a way of biting the cuttle-fish which decapitates it. Hence the frequent sight on the sea of pen-fish, poulps, and cuttle-fish without heads.

The cephaloptera, in fact, is only vulnerable through the head.

Gilliatt was not ignorant of this fact.

He had never seen a devil-fish of this size. His first encounter was with one of the larger species. Another would have been powerless with terror.

With the devil-fish, as with a furious bull, there is a certain moment in the conflict which must be seized. It is the instant when the bull lowers the neck; it is the instant when the devil-fish advances its head. The movement is rapid. He who loses that moment is destroyed.

The things we have described occupied only a few moments. Gilliatt, however, felt the increasing power of its innumerable suckers.

The monster is cunning; it tries first to stupefy its prey. It seizes and then pauses awhile.

Gilliatt grasped his knife; the sucking increased.

He looked at the monster, which seemed to look at him.

Suddenly it loosened from the rock its sixth antenna, and darting it at him, seized him by the left arm.

At the same moment it advanced its head with a violent movement. In one second more its mouth would have fastened on his breast. Bleeding in the sides, and with his two arms entangled, he would have been a dead man.

But Gilliatt was watchful. He avoided the antenna, and at the moment when the monster darted forward to fasten on his breast, he struck it with the knife clenched in his left hand. There were two convulsions in opposite directions; that of the devil-fish and that of its prey. The movement was rapid as a double flash of lightnings.

He had plunged the blade of his knife into the flat slimy substance, and by a rapid movement, like the flourish of a whip in the air, describing a circle round the two eyes, he wrenched the head off as a man would draw a tooth.

The struggle was ended. The folds relaxed. The monster dropped away, like the slow detaching of bands. The four hundred suckers, deprived of their sustaining power, dropped at once from the man and the rock. The mass sank to the bottom of the water.

Breathless with the struggle, Gilliatt could perceive upon the stones at his feet two shapeless, slimy heaps, the head on one side, the remainder of the monster on the other.

Fearing, nevertheless, some convulsive return of his agony, he recoiled to avoid the reach of the dreaded tentacles.

But the monster was quite dead.

Gilliatt closed his knife.

THE PILGRIM SHIP

(FROM "A PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA AND MEDINA," BY
SIR RICHARD F. BURTON)

Disguised as an Afghan, Richard Burton made the pilgrimage to Mecca in the summer of 1853. In the following passage he describes the struggle on the ship that bore the pilgrims across the Red Sea.

THE large craft anchor some three or four miles from the Suez pier so that it is necessary to drop down in a skiff or shore-boat.

Immense was the confusion at the eventful hour of our departure. Suppose us gathered upon the beach, on the morning of a fiery July day, carefully watching our hurriedly-packed goods and chattels, surrounded by a mob of idlers, who are not too proud to pick up waifs and strays, whilst pilgrims are rushing about apparently mad, and friends are weeping, acquaintances are vociferating adieux, boatmen are demanding fees, shopmen are claiming debts, women are shrieking and talking with inconceivable power, and children are crying—in short, for an hour or so we stand in the thick of a human storm. To confound confusion, the boatmen have moored their skiff half a dozen yards away from the shore, lest the porters should be unable to make more than double their fare from the Hajjis. Again the Turkish women make a hideous noise, as they are carried off struggling vainly in brawny arms; the children howl because their mothers howl; and the men scold and swear, because in such scenes none may be silent. The moment we had embarked, each individual found that he or she had missed something of vital importance—a pipe, a child, a box, or a water-melon; and naturally all the servants were in the bazaars, when they should have been in the boat. Therefore, despite the rage of the sailors, who feared being too late for a second trip, we stood for some time on the beach before pulling off.

From the shore we poled to the little pier, where sat the Bey in person to perform a final examination of our passports. Several were detected without the necessary document. Some were bastinadoed,

others were promptly ordered back to Cairo, and the rest were allowed to proceed. At about 10 a.m. (July 6) we hoisted sail, and ran down the channel leading to the roadstead. On our way we had a specimen of what we might expect from our fellow-passengers, the Maghrabi—men of the Maghrab, or Western Africa. A boat crowded with these ruffians ran alongside of us, and, before we could organize a defence, about a score of them poured into our vessel. They carried things too with a high hand, laughed at us, and seemed quite ready to fight. My Indian boy, who happened to let slip the word “Mu’arras,” narrowly escaped a blow with a palm-stick, which would have felled a camel. They outnumbered us, and they were armed; so that, on this occasion, we were obliged to put up with their insolence.

Our Pilgrim Ship, the *Silk el Zahab*, or the *Golden Wire*, was a Sambuk of about fifty tons, with narrow wedge-like bows, a clean water-line, a sharp keel, undecked except upon the poop, which was high enough to act sail in a gale of wind. She carried two masts, raking imminently forwards, the main being considerably larger than the mizen; the former was provided with a huge triangular latine, very deep in the tack, but the second sail was unaccountably wanting. She had no means of reefing, no compass, no log, no sounding lines, no spare ropes, nor even the suspicion of a chart: in her box-like cabin and ribbed hold there was something which savoured of close connection between her model and that of the Indian Toni (dug-out). Such, probably, were the craft which carried old Sesostriis across the Red Sea to Deir; such were the cruisers which once every three years left Ezion-Geber for Tarshish; such the transports of which 130 were required to convey *Ælius Gallus*, with his 10,000 men.

“Bakhshish” was the last as well as the first odious sound I heard in Egypt. The owner of the shore-boat would not allow us to climb the sides of our vessel before paying him his fare, and when we did so, he asked for Bakhshish. If Easterns would only imitate the example of Europeans—I never yet saw an Englishman give Bakhshish to a soul—the nuisance would soon be abated. But on this occasion all my companions complied with the request, and at times it is unpleasant to be singular.

The first look at the interior of our vessel showed a hopeless sight; for Ali Murad, the greedy owner, had promised to take sixty passengers in the hold, but had stretched the number to ninety-seven. Piles of boxes and luggage in every shape and form filled the ship from stem to stern, and a torrent of Hajis was pouring over the sides like ants into the

East-Indian sugar-basin. The poop, too, where we had taken our places, was covered with goods, and a number of pilgrims had established themselves there by might, not by right.

Presently, to our satisfaction, appeared Sa'ad the Demon, equipped as an able seaman, and looking most unlike the proprietor of two large boxes full of valuable merchandise. This energetic individual instantly prepared for action. With our little party to back him, he speedily cleared the poop of intruders and their stuff by the simple process of pushing or rather throwing them off it into the pit below. We then settled down as comfortably as we could; three Syrians, a married Turk with his wife and family, the Rais or captain of the vessel, with a portion of his crew, and our seven selves, composing a total of eighteen human beings, upon a space certainly not exceeding 10 feet by 8. The cabin—a miserable box about the size of the poop, and three feet high—was stuffed, like the hold of a slaver, with fifteen wretches, women and children, and the other ninety-seven were disposed upon the luggage, or squatted on the bulwarks. Having some experience in such matters, and being favoured by fortune, I found a spare bed-frame slung to the ship's side; and giving a dollar to its owner, a sailor—who flattered himself that, because it was his, he would sleep upon it—I instantly appropriated it, preferring any hardship outside, to the condition of a packed herring inside, the place of torment.

Our Maghrabis were fine-looking animals from the deserts about Tripoli and Tunis; so savage that, but a few weeks ago, they had gazed at the cock-boat, and wondered how long it would be growing to the size of the ship that was to take them to Alexandria. Most of them were sturdy young fellows, round-headed, broad-shouldered, tall and large-limbed, with frowning eyes, and voices in a perpetual roar. Their manners were rude, and their faces full of fierce contempt or insolent familiarity. A few old men were there, with countenances expressive of intense ferocity; women as savage and full of fight as men; and handsome boys with shrill voices, and hands always upon their daggers. The women were mere bundles of dirty white rags. The males were clad in burnus, brown or striped woollen cloaks with hoods; they had neither turban nor Tarbush, trusting to their thick curly hair or to the prodigious hardness of their scalps as a defence against the sun; and there was not a slipper nor a shoe amongst the whole party. Of course all were armed; but, fortunately for us, none had anything more formidable than a cut-and-thrust dagger about ten inches long. These Maghrabis travel in hordes under a leader who obtains the temporary title of "Maula,"—the

master. He has generally performed a pilgrimage or two, and has collected a stock of superficial information which secures for him the respect of his followers, and the profound contempt of the heaven-made Ciceroni of Meccah and El Medinah. No people endure greater hardships when upon the pilgrimage than these Africans, who trust almost entirely to alms and other such dispensations of Providence. It is not therefore to be wondered at that they rob whenever an opportunity presents itself. Several cases of theft occurred on board the *Golden Wire*, and as such plunderers allow themselves to be baulked by insufficient defence, they are accused perhaps deservedly of having committed some revolting murders.

The first thing to be done after gaining standing-room was to fight for greater comfort; and never a Holyhead packet in the olden time showed a finer scene of pugnacity than did our pilgrim ship. A few Turks, rugged old men from Anatolia and Caramania, were mixed up with the Maghrabis, and the former began the war by contemptuously elbowing and scolding their wild neighbours. The Maghrabis under their head man, "Maula Ali," a burly savage, in whom I detected a ridiculous resemblance to the Rev. Charles Delafosse, an old and well-remembered schoolmaster, retorted so willingly that in a few minutes nothing was to be seen but a confused mass of humanity, each item indiscriminately punching and pulling, scratching and biting, butting and trampling whatever was obnoxious to such operations, with cries of rage, and all the accompaniments of a proper fray. One of our party on the poop, a Syrian, somewhat incautiously leapt down to aid his countrymen by restoring order. He sank immediately below the surface of the living mass; and when we fished him out, his forehead was cut open, half his beard had disappeared, and a fine sharp set of teeth belonging to some Maghrabi had left their mark in the calf of his leg. The enemy showed no love of fair play, and never appeared contented unless five or six of them were setting upon a single man. This made matters worse. The weaker of course drew their daggers, and a few bad wounds were given and received. In a few minutes five men were completely disabled, and the victors began to dread the consequences of their victory.

Then the fighting stopped, and, as many could not find places, it was agreed that a deputation should wait upon Ali Murad, the owner, to inform him of the crowded state of the vessel. After keeping us in expectation at least three hours, he appeared in a row-boat, preserving a respectful distance, and informed us that anyone who pleased might quit the ship and take back his fare. This left the case exactly what it

was before; none would abandon his party to go on shore: so Ali Murad rowed off towards Suez, giving us a parting injunction to be good boys, and not fight; to trust in Allah, and that Allah would make all things easy to us.

His departure was the signal for a second fray, which in its accidents differed a little from the first. During the previous disturbance we kept *our places with weapons in our hands*. *This time we were summoned* by the Maghrabis to relieve their difficulties, by taking about half a dozen of them on the poop. Sa'ad the Demon at once rose with an oath, and threw amongst us a bundle of "Nebut"—goodly ashen staves six feet long, thick as a man's wrist, well greased, and tried in many a rough bout. He shouted to us, "Defend yourselves if you don't wish to be the meat of the Maghrabis!" and to the enemy, "Dogs and sons of dogs! now shall you see what the children of the Arab are,"—"I am Umar of Daghistan!" "I am Abdullah the son of Joseph!" "I am Sa'ad the Demon!" we exclaimed, "renowning it" by this display of name and patronymic. To do our enemies justice, they showed no signs of flinching; they swarmed towards the poop like angry hornets, and encouraged each other with loud cries of "Allah akbar!" But we had a vantage ground about four feet above them, and their palm-sticks and short daggers could do nothing against our terrible quarter-staves. In vain the "Jacquerie" tried to scale the poop and to overpower us by numbers; their courage only secured them more broken heads.

At first I began to lay on load with "main morte," really fearing to kill someone with such a weapon; but it soon became evident that the Maghrabis' heads and shoulders could bear and did require the utmost exertion of strength. *Presently a thought struck me*. A large earthen jar full of drinking water—in its heavy frame of wood the weight might have been 100 lb.—stood upon the edge of the poop, and the thick of the fray took place underneath. Seeing an opportunity I crept up to the jar, and, without attracting attention, rolled it down by a smart push with the shoulder upon the swarm of assailants. The fall caused a shriller shriek to rise above the ordinary din, for heads, limbs, and bodies were sorely bruised by the weight, scratched by the broken potsherds, and wetted by the sudden discharge. A fear that something worse might be coming made the Maghrabis slink off towards the end of the vessel. After a few minutes, we, sitting in grave silence, received a deputation of individuals in whity-brown burnus, spotted and striped with what Mephistopheles calls a "curious juice." They solicited peace, which we granted upon the condition that they would pledge themselves to

keep it. Our heads, shoulders, and hands were penitentially kissed, and presently the fellows returned to bind up their hurts in dirty rags.

We owed this victory entirely to our own exertions, and the meek Umar was by far the fiercest of the party. Our Rais, as we afterwards learned, was an old fool who could do nothing but call for the *Fatihah* or opening chapter of the Koran, claim *Bakhshish* at every place where we moored for the night, and spend his leisure hours in the "*Caccia del Mediterraneo*." Our crew consisted of half a dozen Egyptian lads, who, not being able to defend themselves, were periodically chastised by the Maghrabi, especially when any attempt was made to cook, to fetch water, or to prepare a pipe.

THE WHITE WHALE

(FROM "MOBY DICK," BY HERMAN MELVILLE)

Melville's sea romances were built on a foundation of experience, for he had followed the sea from his boyhood, and knew the hardships and adventures of the whaling-ships at first hand; while his epic imagination gave all the common incidents of a voyage, an almost Homeric splendour and significance. Captain Ahab, whose final reckoning with his enemy, the white whale Moby Dick, is given here, is a Titan of the sea, a fit companion in his mania of pursuit, to the Flying Dutchman and his phantom crew.

THAT night, in the mid-watch, when the old man—as his wont at intervals—stepped forth from the scuttle in which he leaned, and went to his pivot-hole, he suddenly thrust out his face fiercely, snuffing up the sea air as a sagacious ship's dog will, in drawing nigh to some barbarous isle. He declared that a whale must be near. Soon that peculiar odour, sometimes to a great distance given forth by the living sperm whale, was palpable to all the watch; nor was any mariner surprised when, after inspecting the compass, and then the dog-vane, and then ascertaining the precise bearing of the odour as nearly as possible, Ahab rapidly ordered the ship's course to be slightly altered, and the sail to be shortened.

The acute policy dictating these movements was sufficiently vindicated at daybreak, by the sight of a long sleek on the sea directly and lengthwise ahead, smooth as oil, and resembling in the pleated watery wrinkles bordering it, the polished metallic-like marks of some swift tide-rip, at the mouth of a deep, rapid stream.

"Man the mast-heads! Call all hands!"

Thundering with the butts of three clubbed handspikes on the fore-castle deck, Daggoo roused the sleepers with such judgment claps that they seemed to exhale from the scuttle, so instantaneously did they appear with their clothes in their hands.

"What d'ye see?" cried Ahab, flattening his face to the sky.

"Nothing, nothing, sir!" was the sound hailing down in reply.

"T'gallant sails!—stunsails! alow and aloft, and on both sides!"

All sail being set, he now cast loose the life-line, reserved for swaying him to the main royal-mast head; and in a few moments they were hoisting him thither, when, while but two-thirds of the way aloft, and while peering ahead through the horizontal vacancy between the main-top-sail and top-gallant-sail, he raised a gull-like cry in the air, "There she blows!—there she blows! A hump like a snow-hill! It is Moby Dick!"

Fired by the cry which seemed simultaneously taken up by the three look-outs, the men on deck rushed to the rigging to behold the famous whale they had so long been pursuing. Ahab had now gained his final perch, some feet above the other look-outs, Tashtego standing just beneath him on the cap of the top-gallant-mast, so that the Indian's head was almost on a level with Ahab's heel. From this height the whale was now seen some mile or so ahead, at every roll of the sea revealing his high sparkling hump, and regularly jetting his silent spout into the air. To the credulous mariners it seemed the same silent spout they had so long ago beheld in the moonlit Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

"And did none of ye see it before?" cried Ahab, hailing the perched men all around him.

"I saw him almost that same instant, sir, that Captain Ahab did, and I cried out," said Tashtego.

"Not the same instant; not the same—no, the doubloon is mine, Fate reserved the doubloon for me. *I* only; none of ye could have raised the White Whale first. There she blows! there she blows!—there she blows! There again!—there again!" he cried, in long-drawn, lingering, methodic tones, attuned to the gradual prolongings of the whale's visible jets. "He's going to sound! In stunsails! Down top-gallant-sails! Stand by three boats. Mr. Starbuck, remember, stay on board, and keep the ship. Helm there! Luff, luff a point! So; steady, man, steady! There go flukes! No, no; only black water! All ready the boats there? Stand by, stand by! Lower me, Mr. Starbuck; lower, lower,—quick, quicker!" and he slid through the air to the deck.

"He is heading straight to leeward, sir," cried Stubb, "right away from us; cannot have seen the ship yet."

"Be dumb, man! Stand by the braces! Hard down the helm!—brace up! Shiver her!—shiver her!—So; well that! Boats, boats!"

Soon all the boats but Starbuck's were dropped; all the boat-sails set—all the paddles plying; with rippling swiftness, shooting to leeward; and Ahab heading the onset. A pale death-glimmer lit up Fedallah's sunken eyes; a hideous motion gnawed his mouth.

Like noiseless nautilus shells, their light prows sped through the sea; but only slowly they neared the foe. As they neared him, the ocean grew still more smooth; seemed drawing a carpet over its waves; seemed a noon-meadow, so serenely it spread. At length the breathless hunter came so nigh his seemingly unsuspecting prey, that his entire dazzling hump was distinctly visible, sliding along the sea as if an isolated thing, and continually set in a revolving ring of finest, fleecy, greenish foam. He saw the vast, involved wrinkles of the slightly projecting head beyond. Before it, far out on the soft Turkish-rugged waters, went the glistening white shadow from his broad, milky forehead, a musical rippling playfully accompanying the shade; and behind, the blue waters interchangeably flowed over into the moving valley of his steady wake; and on either hand bright bubbles arose and danced by his side. But these were broken again by the light toes of hundreds of gay fowls softly feathering the sea alternate with their fitful flight; and like to some flag-staff rising from the painted hull of an argosy, the tall but shattered pole of a recent lance projected from the white whale's back; and at intervals one of the cloud of soft-toed fowls hovering, and to and fro skimming like a canopy over the fish, silently perched and rocked on this pole, the long tail feathers streaming like pennons.

A gentle joyousness—a mighty mildness of repose in swiftness, invested the gliding whale. Not the white bull Jupiter swimming away with ravished Europa clinging to his graceful horns; his lovely, leering eyes sideways intent upon the maid; with smooth bewitching fleetness, rippling straight for the nuptial bower in Crete; not Jove, not that great majesty Supreme! did surpass the glorified White Whale as he so divinely swam.

On each soft side—coincident with the parted swell, that but once leaving him, then flowed so wide away—on each bright side, the whale shed off enticings. No wonder there had been some among the hunters who, namelessly transported and allured by all this serenity, had ventured to assail it; but had fatally found that quietude but the vesture of tornadoes. Yet calm, enticing calm, oh, whale! thou glidest on, to all who for the first time eye thee, no matter how many in that same way thou may'st have bejuggled and destroyed before.

And thus, through the serene tranquillities of the tropical sea, among waves whose hand-clappings were suspended by exceeding rapture, Moby Dick moved on, still withholding from sight the full terrors of his submerged trunk, entirely hiding the wrenched hideousness of his jaw. But soon the fore part of him slowly rose from the water; for an instant his

whole marbleized body formed a high arch, like Virginia's Natural Bridge, and warningly waving his bannered flukes in the air, the grand god revealed himself, sounded, and went out of sight. Hoveringly halting, and dipping on the wind, the white sca-fowls longingly lingered over the agitated pool that he left.

With oars apeak, and paddles down, the sheets of their sails adrift, the three boats now stilly floated, awaiting Moby Dick's reappearance.

"An hour," said Ahab, standing rooted in his boat's stern; and he gazed beyond the whale's place, towards the dim blue spaces and wide wooing vacancies to leeward. It was only an instant; for again his eye seemed whirling round in his head as he swept the watery circle. The breeze now freshened; the sea began to swell.

"The birds!—the birds!" cried Tashtego.

In long Indian file, as when herons take wing, the white birds were now all flying towards Ahab's boat; and when within a few yards began fluttering over the water there, wheeling round and round, with joyous, expectant cries. Their vision was keener than man's; Ahab could discover no sign in the sea. But suddenly as he peered down and down into its depths, he profoundly saw a white living spot no bigger than a white weasel, with wonderful celerity uprising, and magnifying as it rose, till it turned, and then there were plainly revealed two long crooked rows of white, glistening teeth, floating up from the undiscoverable bottom. It was Moby Dick's open mouth and scrolled jaw; his vast, shadowed bulk still half blending with the blue of the sea. The glittering mouth yawned beneath the boat like an open-doored marble tomb; and giving one sidelong sweep with his steering oar, Ahab whirled the craft aside from this tremendous apparition. Then, calling upon Fedallah to change places with him, went forward to the bows, and seizing Perth's harpoon, commanded his crew to grasp their oars and stand by to stern.

Now, by reason of this timely spinning round the boat upon its axis, its bow, by anticipation, was made to face the whale's head while yet under water. But as if perceiving this stratagem, Moby Dick, with that malicious intelligence ascribed to him, sidelingly transplanted himself, as it were, in an instant, shooting his plated head lengthwise beneath the boat.

Through and through; through every plank and each rib, it thrilled for an instant, the whale obliquely lying on his back, in the manner of a biting shark, slowly and feelingly taking its bows full within his mouth, so that the long, narrow, scrolled lower jaw curled high up into the open air, and one of the teeth caught in a row-lock. The bluish pearl-white

of the inside of the jaw was within six inches of Ahab's head, and reached higher than that. In this attitude the White Whale now shook the slight cedar as a mildly cruel cat her mouse. With unastonished eyes Fedallah gazed, and crossed his arms; but the tiger-yellow crew were tumbling over each other's heads to gain the uttermost stern.

And now, while both elastic gunwales were springing in and out, as the whale dallied with the doomed craft in this devilish way; and from his body being submerged beneath the boat, he could not be darted at from the bows, for the bows were almost inside of him, as it were; and while the other boats involuntarily paused, as before a quick crisis impossible to withstand, then it was that monomaniac Ahab, furious with this tantalizing vicinity of his foe, which placed him all alive and helpless in the very jaws he hated; frenzied with all this, he seized the long bone with his naked hands, and wildly strove to wrench it from its gripe. As now he thus vainly strove, the jaw slipped from him; the frail gunwales bent in, collapsed, and snapped, as both jaws, like an enormous shears, sliding further aft, bit the craft completely in twain, and locked themselves fast again in the sea, midway between the two floating wrecks. These floated aside, the broken ends drooping, the crew at the stern-wreck clinging to the gunwales, and striving to hold fast to the oars to lash them across.

At that prelude moment, ere the boat was yet snapped, Ahab, the first to perceive the whale's intent, by the crafty upraising of his head, a movement that loosed his hold for the time; at that moment his hand had made one final effort to push the boat out of the bite. But only slipping further into the whale's mouth, and tilting over sideways as it slipped, the boat had shaken off his hold on the jaw; spilled him out of it, as he leaned to the push; and so he fell flat-faced upon the sea.

Ripplingly withdrawing from his prey, Moby Dick now lay at a little distance, vertically thrusting his oblong white head up and down in the billows; and at the same time slowly revolving his whole spindled body; so that when his vast wrinkled forehead rose—some twenty or more feet out of the water—the now rising swells, with all their confluent waves, dazzlingly broke against it; vindictively tossing their shivered spray still higher into the air.¹ So, in a gale, the but half

¹ This motion is peculiar to the sperm whale. It receives its designation (pitchpoling) from its being likened to that preliminary up-and-down poise of the whale-lance, in the exercise called pitchpoling, previously described. By this motion the whale must best and most comprehensively view whatever objects may be encircling him.

baffled Channel billows only recoil from the base of the Eddystone, triumphantly to overleap its summit with their scud.

But soon resuming his horizontal attitude, Moby Dick swam swiftly round and round the wrecked crew; sideways churning the water in his vengeful wake, as if lashing himself up to still another and more deadly assault. The sight of the splintered boat seemed to madden him, as the blood of grapes and mulberries cast before Antiochus's elephants in the book of Maccabees. Meanwhile Ahab half smothered in the foam of the whale's insolent tail, and too much of a cripple to swim,—though he could still keep afloat, even in the heart of such a whirlpool as that; helpless Ahab's head was seen, like a tossed bubble which the least chance shock might burst. From the boat's fragmentary stern, Fedallah incuriously and mildly eyed him; the clinging crew, at the other drifting end, could not succour him; more than enough was it for them to look to themselves. For so revolvingly appalling was the White Whale's aspect, and so planetarily swift the ever-contracting circles he made, that he seemed horizontally swooping upon them. And though the other boats, unharmed, still hovered hard by; still they dared not pull into the eddy to strike, lest that should be the signal for the instant destruction of the jeopardized castaways, Ahab and all; nor in that case could they themselves hope to escape. With straining eyes, then, they remained on the outer edge of the direful zone, whose centre had now become the old man's head.

Meantime, from the beginning all this had been descried from the ship's mast heads; and squaring her yards, she had borne down upon the scene; and was now so nigh, that Ahab in the water hailed her;—"Sail on the"—but that moment a breaking sea dashed on him from Moby Dick, and whelmed him for the time. But struggling out of it again and chancing to rise on a towering crest, he shouted,—“Sail on the whale!—Drive him off!”

The *Pequod's* prows were pointed; and breaking up the charmed circle, she effectually parted the white whale from his victim. As he sullenly swam off, the boats flew to the rescue.

Dragged into Stubb's boat with blood-shot, blinded eyes, the white brine caking in his wrinkles; the long tension of Ahab's bodily strength did crack, and helplessly he yielded to his body's doom for a time, lying all crushed in the bottom of Stubb's boat, like one trodden under foot of herds of elephants. Far inland, nameless wails came from him, as desolate sounds from out ravines.

But this intensity of his physical prostration did but so much the more

abbreviate it. In an instant's compass, great hearts sometimes condense to one deep pang, the sum total of those shallow pains kindly diffused through feebler men's whole lives. And so, such hearts, though summary in each one suffering; still, if the gods decree it, in their life-time aggregate a whole age of woe, wholly made up of instantaneous intensities; for even in their pointless centres, those noble natures contain the entire circumferences of inferior souls.

"The harpoon," said Ahab, halfway rising, and draggingly leaning on one bended arm—"is it safe?"

"Aye, sir, for it was not darted; this is it," said Stubb, showing it.

"Lay it before me;—any missing men?"

"One, two, three, four, five;—there were five oars, sir, and here are five men."

"That's good.—Help me, man; I wish to stand. So, so, I see him! there! there! going to leeward still; what a leaping spout!—Hands off from me! The eternal sap runs up in Ahab's bones again! Set the sail; out oars; the helm!"

It is often the case that when a boat is stove, its crew, being picked up by another boat, help to work that second boat; and the chase is thus continued with what is called double-banked oars. It was thus now. But the added power of the boat did not equal the added power of the whale, for he seemed to have treble-banked his every fin; swimming with a velocity which plainly showed, that if now, under these circumstances, pushed on, the chase would prove an indefinitely prolonged, if not a hopeless one; nor could any crew endure for so long a period, such an unintermitted, intense straining at the oar; a thing barely tolerable only in some one brief vicissitude. The ship itself, then, as it sometimes happens, offered the most promising intermediate means of overtaking the chase. Accordingly, the boats now made for her, and were soon swayed up to their cranes—the two parts of the wrecked boats having been previously secured by her—and then hoisting everything to her side, and stacking her canvas high up, and sideways outstretching it with stun-sails, like the double-jointed wings of an albatross; the *Pequod* bore down in the leeward wake of *Moby Dick*. At the well-known, methodic intervals, the whale's glittering spout was regularly announced from the manned mast-heads; and when he would be reported as just gone down, Ahab would take the time, and then pacing the deck, binnacle-watch in hand, so soon as the last second of the allotted hour expired, his voice was heard.—"Whose is the doubloon now? D'y'e see him?" and if the reply was No, sir! straightway he commanded them to lift him to his

perch. In this way the day wore on; Ahab, now aloft and motionless; anon, unrestingly pacing the planks.

As he was thus walking, uttering no sound, except to hail the men aloft, or to bid them hoist a sail still higher, or to spread one to a still greater breadth—thus to and fro pacing, beneath his slouched hat, at every turn he passed his own wrecked boat, which had been dropped upon the quarter-deck, and lay there reversed; broken bow to shattered stern. At last he paused before it; and as in an already over-clouded sky fresh troops of clouds will sometimes sail across, so over the old man's face there now stole some such added gloom as this.

Stubb saw him pause; and perhaps intending, not vainly, though, to evince his own unabated fortitude, and thus keep up a valiant place in his Captain's mind, he advanced, and eyeing the wreck exclaimed—"The thistle the ass refused; it pricked his mouth too keenly, sir, ha! ha!"

"What soulless thing is this that laughs before a wreck? Man, man! did I not know thee brave as fearless fire (and as mechanical) I could swear thou wert a poltroon. Groan nor laugh should be heard before a wreck."

"Ay, sir," said Starbuck, drawing near, "'tis a solemn sight; an omen, and an ill one."

"Omen? omen?—the dictionary! If the gods think to speak outright to man, they will honourably speak outright; not shake their heads, and give an old wives' darkling hint.—Begone! Ye two are the opposite poles of one thing; Starbuck is Stubb reversed, and Stubb is Starbuck; and ye two are all mankind; and Ahab stands alone among the millions of the peopled earth, nor gods nor men his neighbours! Cold, cold—I shiver!—How now? Aloft there! D'ye see him? Sing out for every spout, though he spout ten times a second!"

The day was nearly done; only the hem of his golden robe was rustling. Soon it was almost dark, but the look-out men still remained unset.

"Can't see the spout now, sir;—too dark"—cried a voice from the air.

"How heading when last seen?"

"As before, sir,—straight to leeward."

"Good! he will travel slower now 'tis night. Down royals and top-gallant stun-sails, Mr. Starbuck. We must not run over him before morning; he's making a passage now, and may heave-to a while. Helm there! keep her full before the wind!—Aloft! come down!—Mr. Stubb, send a fresh hand to the fore-mast head, and see it manned till morning."

—Then advancing towards the doubloon in the main-mast—"Men, this gold is mine, for I earned it; but I shall let it abide here till the White Whale is dead; and then, whosoever of ye first raises him, upon the day he shall be killed, this gold is that man's; and if on that day I shall again raise him, then, ten times its sum shall be divided among all of ye! Away now! the deck is thine, sir."

And so saying, he placed himself halfway within the scuttle, and slouching his hat, stood there till dawn, except when at intervals rousing himself to see how the night wore on.

At day-break, the three mast-heads were punctually manned afresh.

"D'ye see him?" cried Ahab, after allowing a little space for the light to spread.

"See nothing, sir."

"Turn up all hands and make sail! he travels faster than I thought for;—the top-gallant sails!—aye, they should have been kept on her all night. But no matter—'tis but resting for the rush."

Here be it said, that this pertinacious pursuit of one particular whale, continued through day into night, and through night into day, is a thing by no means unprecedented in the South Sea fishery. For such is the wonderful skill, prescience of experience, and invincible confidence acquired by some great natural geniuses among the Nantucket commanders; that from the simple observation of a whale when last descried, they will, under certain given circumstances, pretty accurately foretell both the direction in which he will continue to swim for a time, while out of sight, as well as his probable rate of progression during that period. And, in these cases, somewhat as a pilot, when about losing sight of a coast, whose general trending he well knows, and which he desires shortly to return to again, but at some further point; like as this pilot stands by his compass, and takes the precise bearing of the cape at present visible, in order the more certainly to hit aright the remote, unseen headland, eventually to be visited: so does the fisherman, at his compass, with the whale; for after being chased, and diligently marked, through several hours of daylight, then, when night obscures the fish, the creature's future wake through the darkness is almost as established to the sagacious mind of the hunter, as the pilot's coast is to him. So that to this hunter's wondrous skill, the proverbial evanescence of a thing writ in water, a wake, is to all desired purposes well nigh as reliable as the steadfast land. And as the mighty iron Leviathan of the modern railway is so familiarly known in its every pace, that, with watches in their hands, men time his

rate as doctors that of a baby's pulse; and lightly say of it, the up train or the down train will reach such or such a spot, at such or such an hour; even so, almost, there are occasions when these Nantucketers time that other Leviathan of the deep, according to the observed humour of his speed; and say to themselves, so many hours hence this whale will have gone two hundred miles, will have about reached this or that degree of latitude or longitude. But to render this acuteness at all successful in the end, the wind and the sea must be the whaleman's allies; for of what present avail to the becalmed or windbound mariner is the skill that assures him he is exactly ninety-three leagues and a quarter from his port? Inferable from these statements, are many collateral subtle matters touching the chase of whales.

The ship tore on; leaving such a furrow in the sea as when a cannon-ball, missent, becomes a plough-share and turns up the level field.

"By salt and hemp!" cried Stubb, "but this swift motion of the deck creeps up one's legs and tingles at the heart. This ship and I are two brave fellows!—Ha! ha! Some one take me up, and launch me, spine-wise, on the sea,—for by live-oaks! my spine's a keel. Ha, ha! we go the gait that leaves no dust behind!"

"There she blows—she blows!—she blows!—right ahead!" was now the mast-head cry.

"Aye, aye!" cried Stubb, "I knew it—ye can't escape—blow on and split your spout, O whale! the mad fiend himself is after ye! blow your trump—blister your lungs!—Ahab will dam off your blood, as a miller shuts his water-gate upon the stream!"

And Stubb did but speak out for well nigh all that crew. The frenzies of the chase had by this time worked them bubblingly up, like old wine worked anew. Whatever pale fears and forebodings some of them might have felt before, these were not only now kept out of sight through the growing awe of Ahab, but they were broken up, and on all sides routed, as timid prairie hares that scatter before the bounding bison. The hand of Fate had snatched all their souls; and by the stirring perils of the previous day; the rack of the past night's suspense; the fixed, unfearing, blind, reckless way in which their wild craft went plunging towards its flying mark; by all these things, their hearts were bowled along. The wind that made great bellies of their sails, and rushed the vessel on by arms invisible as irresistible; this seemed the symbol of that unseen agency which so enslaved them to the race.

They were one man, not thirty. For as the one ship that held them all; though it was put together of all contrasting things—oak, and maple,

and pine wood; iron, and pitch, and hemp—yet all these ran into each other in the one concrete hull, which shot on its way, both balanced and directed by the long central keel; even so, all the individualities of the crew, this man's valour, that man's fear; guilt and guiltlessness, all varieties were welded into oneness, and were all directed to that fatal goal which Ahab their one lord and keel did point to.

The rigging lived. The mast-heads, like the tops of tall palms, were outspreadingly tufted with arms and legs. Clinging to a spar with one hand, some reached forth the other with impatient wavings; others, shading their eyes from the vivid sunlight, sat far out on the rocking yards; all the spars in full bearing of mortals, ready and ripe for their fate. Ah! how they still strove through that infinite blueness to seek out the thing that might destroy them!

"Why sing ye not out for him, if ye see him?" cried Ahab, when, after the lapse of some minutes since the first cry, no more had been heard. "Sway me up, men; ye have been deceived; not Moby Dick casts one odd jet that way, and then disappears."

It was even so; in their headlong eagerness, the men had mistaken some other thing for the whale-spout, as the event itself soon proved; for hardly had Ahab reached his perch; hardly was the rope belayed to its pin on deck, when he struck the keynote to an orchestra, that made the air vibrate as with the combined discharges of rifles. The triumphant halloo of thirty buckskin lungs was heard, as—much nearer to the ship than the place of the imaginary jet, less than a mile ahead—Moby Dick bodily burst into view! For not by any calm and indolent spoutings; not by the peaceable gush of that mystic fountain in his head, did the White Whale now reveal his vicinity; but by the far more wondrous phenomenon of breaching. Rising with his utmost velocity from the furthest depths, the Sperm Whale thus booms his entire bulk into the pure element of air, and piling up a mountain of dazzling foam, shows his place to the distance of seven miles and more. In those moments, the torn, enraged waves he shakes off, seem his mane; in some cases, this breaching is his act of defiance.

"There she breaches! there she breaches!" was the cry, as in his immeasurable bravado the White Whale tossed himself salmon-like to Heaven. So suddenly seen in the blue plain of the sea, and relieved against the still bluer margin of the sky, the spray that he raised, for the moment, intolerably glittered and glared like a glacier; and stood there gradually fading and fading away from its first sparkling intensity, to the dim mistiness of an advancing shower in a vale.

"Aye, breach your last to the sun, Moby Dick!" cried Ahab, "thy hour and thy harpoon are at hand!—Down! down all of ye, but one man at the fore. The boats!—stand by!"

Unmindful of the tedious rope-ladders of the shrouds, the men, like shooting stars, slid to the deck, by the isolated backstays and halyards; while Ahab, less dartingly, but still rapidly was dropped from his perch.

"Lower away," he cried, so soon as he had reached his boat—a spare one, rigged the afternoon previous. "Mr. Starbuck, the ship is thine—keep away from the boats, but keep near them. Lower, all!"

As if to strike a quick terror into them, by this time being the first assailant himself, Moby Dick had turned, and was now coming for the three crews. Ahab's boat was central; and cheering his men, he told them he would take the whale head-and-head,—that is, pull straight up to his forehead,—a not uncommon thing; for when within a certain limit, such a course excludes the coming onset from the whale's sidelong vision. But ere that close limit was gained, and while yet all three boats were plain as the ship's three masts to his eye; the White Whale churning himself into furious speed, almost in an instant as it were, rushing among the boats with open jaws, and a lashing tail, offered appalling battle on every side; and heedless of the irons darted at him from every boat, seemed only intent on annihilating each separate plank of which those boats were made. But skilfully manœuvred, incessantly wheeling like trained chargers in the field, the boats for a while eluded him; though, at times, but by a plank's breadth; while all the time, Ahab's unearthly slogan tore every other cry but his to shreds.

But at last in his untraceable evolutions, the White Whale so crossed and recrossed, and in a thousand ways entangled the slack of the three lines now fast to him, that they foreshortened, and, of themselves, warped the devoted boats towards the planted irons in him; though now for a moment the whale drew aside a little, as if to rally for a more tremendous charge. Seizing that opportunity, Ahab first paid out more line: and then was rapidly hauling and jerking in upon it again—hoping that way to disencumber it of some snarls—when lo!—a sight more savage than the embattled teeth of sharks.

Caught and twisted—corkscrewed in the mazes of the line, loose harpoons and lances, with all their bristling barbs and points, came flashing and dripping up to the chocks in the bows of Ahab's boat. Only one thing could be done. Seizing the boat-knife, he critically reached within—through—and then, without—the rays of steel; dragged in the line beyond, passed it, inboard, to the bowsman, and then, twice sunder-

ing the rope near the chocks—dropped the intercepted fagot of steel into the sea; and was all fast again. That instant, the White Whale made a sudden rush among the remaining tangles of the other lines; by so doing, irresistibly dragged the more involved boats of Stubb and Flask towards his flukes; dashed them together like two rolling husks on a surf-beaten beach, and then, diving down into the sea, disappeared in a boiling maelstrom, in which, for a space, the odorous cedar chips of the wrecks danced round and round, like the grated nutmeg in a swiftly stirred bowl of punch.

While the two crews were yet circling in the waters, reaching out after the revolving line-tubs, oars, and other floating furniture, while aslope little Flask bobbed up and down like an empty vial, twitching his legs upwards to escape the dreaded jaws of sharks; and Stubb was lustily singing out for some one to ladle him up; and while the old man's line—now parting—admitted of his pulling into the creamy pool to rescue whom he could;—in that wild simultaneousness of a thousand concreted perils—Ahab's yet unstricken boat seemed drawn up towards Heaven by invisible wires,—as, arrow-like, shooting perpendicularly from the sea, the White Whale dashed his broad forehead against its bottom, and sent it, turning over and over, into the air; till it fell again—gunwale downwards—and Ahab and his men struggled out from under it, like seals from a seaside cave.

The first uprising momentum of the whale—modifying its direction as he struck the surface—involuntarily launched him along it, to a little distance from the centre of the destruction he had made; and with his back to it, he now lay for a moment slowly feeling with his flukes from side to side; and whenever a stray oar, bit of plank, the least chip or crumb of the boats touched his skin, his tail swiftly drew back, and came sideways smiting the sea. But soon, as if satisfied that his work for that time was done, he pushed his pleated forehead through the ocean, and trailing after him the intertangled lines, continued his leeward way at a traveller's methodic pace.

As before, the attentive ship having descried the whole fight, again came bearing down to the rescue, and dropping a boat, picked up the floating mariners, tubs, oars and whatever else could be caught at, and safely landed them on her decks. Some sprained shoulders, wrists, and ankles; livid contusions; wrenched harpoons and lances; inextricable intricacies of rope; shattered oars and planks; all these were there; but no fatal or even serious ill seemed to have befallen any one. As with Fedallah the day before, so Ahab was now found grimly clinging to his

boat's broken half, which afforded a comparatively easy float; nor did it so exhaust him as the previous day's mishap.

But when he was helped to the deck, all eyes were fastened upon him; as instead of standing by himself he still half-hung upon the shoulder of Starbuck, who had thus far been the foremost to assist him. His ivory leg had been snapped off, leaving but one short sharp splinter.

"Aye aye, Starbuck, 'tis sweet to lean sometimes, be the leaner who he will; and would old Ahab had leaned oftener than he has."

"The ferrule has not stood, sir," said the carpenter, now coming up; "I put good work into that leg."

"But no bones broken, sir, I hope," said Stubb with true concern.

"Aye! and all splintered to pieces, Stubb!—d'ye see it. But even with a broken bone, old Ahab is untouched; and I account no living bone of mine one jot more me, than this dead one that's lost. Nor white whale, nor man, nor fiend, can so much as graze old Ahab in his own proper and inaccessible being. Can any lead touch yonder floor, any mast scrape yonder roof?—Aloft there! which way?"

"Dead to leeward, sir."

"Up helm, then; pile on the sail again, ship keepers! down the rest of the spare boats and rig them—Mr. Starbuck away, and muster the boat's crews."

"Let me first help thee towards the bulwarks, sir."

"Oh, oh, oh! how this splinter gores me now! Accursed fate! that the unconquerable captain in the soul should have such a craven mate!"

"Sir?"

"My body, man, not thee. Give me something for a cane—there, that shivered lance will do. Muster the men. Surely I have not seen him yet. By heaven it cannot be!—missing?—quick! call them all."

The old man's hinted thought was true. Upon mustering the company, the Parsee was not there.

"The Parsee!" cried Stubb—"he must have been caught in——"

"The black vomit wrench thee!—run all of ye above, aloft, cabin, forecabin—find him—not gone—not gone!"

But quickly they returned to him with the tidings that the Parsee was nowhere to be found.

"Aye, sir," said Stubb—"caught among the tangles of your line—I thought I saw him dragging under."

"My line! my line? Gone?—gone? What means that little word?—What death-knell rings in it, that old Ahab shakes as if he were the belfry. The harpoon, too!—toss over the litter there,—d'ye see it?—"

the forged iron, men, the white whale's—no, no, no,—blistered fool! this hand did dart it!—'tis in the fish!—Aloft there! Keep him nailed—Quick!—all hands to the rigging of the boats—collect the oars—harpooners! the irons, the irons!—hoist the royals higher—a pull on all the sheets!—helm there! steady, steady for your life! I'll ten times girdle the unmeasured globe; yea and dive straight through it, but I'll slay him yet!"

"Great God! but for one single instant show thyself," cried Starbuck; "never, never wilt thou capture him, old man.—In Jesus' name no more of this, that's worse than devil's madness. Two days chased; twice stove to splinters; thy very leg once more snatched from under thee; thy evil shadow gone—all good angels mobbing thee with warnings:—what more wouldst thou have?—Shall we keep chasing this murderous fish till he swamps the last man? Shall we be dragged by him to the bottom of the sea? Shall we be towed by him to the infernal world? Oh, oh,—impiety and blasphemy to hunt him more!"

"Starbuck, of late I've felt strangely moved to thee; ever since that hour we both saw—thou know'st what, in one another's eyes. But in this matter of the whale, be the front of thy face to me as the palm of this hand—a lipless, unfeatured blank. Ahab is for ever Ahab, man. This whole act's immutably decreed. 'Twas rehearsed by thee and me a billion years before this ocean rolled. Fool! I am the Fates' lieutenant; I act under orders. Look thou, underling! that thou obeyest mine.—Stand round me, men. Ye see an old man cut down to the stump; leaning on a shivered lance; propped up on a lonely foot. 'Tis Ahab—his body's part; but Ahab's soul's a centipede, that moves upon a hundred legs. I feel strained, half-stranded, as ropes that tow dismasted frigates in a gale; and I may look so. But ere I break, ye'll hear me crack; and till ye hear *that*, know that Ahab's hawser tows his purpose yet. Believe ye, men, in the things called omens? Then laugh aloud, and cry encore! For ere they drown, drowning things will twice rise to the surface; then rise again, to sink for evermore. So with Moby Dick—two days he's floated—to-morrow will be the third. Aye, men, he'll rise once more,—but only to spout his last! D'ye feel brave men, brave?"

"As fearless fire," cried Stubb.

"And as mechanical," muttered Ahab. Then as the men went forward, he muttered on: "The things called omens! And yesterday I talked the same to Starbuck there, concerning my broken boat. Oh! how valiantly I seek to drive out of others' hearts what's clinched so fast in mine!—The Parsee—the Parsee!—gone, gone! and he was to go

before:—but still was to be seen again ere I could perish.—How's that? —There's a riddle now might baffle all the lawyers backed by the ghosts of the whole line of judges:—like a hawk's beak it pecks my brain. *I'll, I'll solve it, though!*"

When dusk descended, the whale was still in sight to leeward.

So once more the sail was shortened, and everything passed nearly as on the previous night; only, the sound of hammers, and the hum of the grindstone was heard till nearly daylight, as the men toiled by lanterns in the complete and careful rigging of the spare boats and sharpening their fresh weapons for the morrow. Meantime, of the broken keel of Ahab's wrecked craft the carpenter made him another leg; while still as on the night before, slouched Ahab stood fixed within his scuttle; his hid, heliotrope glance anticipatigly gone backward on its dial; sat due eastward for the earliest sun.

The morning of the third day dawned fair and fresh, and once more the solitary night-man at the fore-mast-head was relieved by crowds of the daylight look-outs, who dotted every mast and almost every spar.

"D'ye see him?" cried Ahab; but the whale was not yet in sight.

"In his infallible wake, though; but follow that wake, that's all. Helm there; steady, as thou goest, and hast been going. What a lovely day again! were it a new-made world, and made for a summer-house to the angels, and this morning the first of its throwing open to them, a fairer day could not dawn upon that world. Here's food for thought, had Ahab time to think; but Ahab never thinks; he only feels, feels, feels; *that's* tingling enough for mortal man! to think's audacity. God only has that right and privilege. Thinking is, or ought to be, a coolness and a calmness; and our poor hearts throb, and our poor brains beat too much for that. And yet, I've sometimes thought my brain was very calm—frozen calm, this old skull cracks so, like a glass in which the contents turned to ice, and shiver it. And still this hair is growing now; this moment growing, and heat must breed it; but no, it's like that sort of common grass that will grow anywhere, between the earthy clefts of Greenland ice or in Vesuvius lava. How the wild winds blow it; they whip it about me as the torn shreds of split sails lash the tossed ship they cling to. A vile wind that has no doubt blown ere this through prison corridors and cells, and wards of hospitals, and ventilated them, and now comes blowing hither as innocent as fleeces. Out upon it!—it's tainted. Were I the wind, I'd blow no more on such a wicked, miserable world. I'd crawl somewhere to a cave, and slink there. And yet, 'tis a noble

and heroic thing, the wind! who ever conquered it? In every fight it has the last and bitterest blow. Run tilting at it, and you but run through it. Ha! a coward wind that strikes stark naked men, but will not stand to receive a single blow. Even Ahab is a braver thing—a nobler thing than *that*. Would now the wind but had a body; but all the things that most exasperate and outrage mortal man, all these things are bodiless, but only bodiless as objects, not as agents. There's a most special, a most cunning, oh, a most malicious difference! And yet, I say again, and swear it now, that there's something all glorious and gracious in the wind. These warm Trade Winds, at least, that in the clear heavens blow straight on, in strong and steadfast, vigorous mildness; and veer not from their mark, however the baser currents of the sea may turn and tack, and mightiest Mississippies of the land swift and swerve about, uncertain where to go at last. And by the eternal Poles! these same Trades that so directly blow my good ship on these Trades, or something like *them*—something so unchangeable, and full as strong, blow my keeled soul along! To it! Aloft there! What d'ye see?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Nothing! and noon at hand! The doubloon goes a-begging! See the sun! Aye, aye, it must be so. I've oversailed him. How, got the start? Aye, he's chasing *me* now; not I, *him*—that's bad; I might have known it, too. Fool! the lines—the harpoons he's towing. Aye, aye, I have run him by last night. About! about! Come down, all of ye, but the regular look outs! Man the braces!"

Steering as she had done, the wind had been somewhat on the *Pequod's* quarter, so that now being pointed in the reverse direction, the braced ship sailed hard upon the breeze as she recharged the cream in her own white wake.

"Against the wind he now steers for the open jaw," murmured Starbuck to himself, as he coiled the new-hauled main-brace upon the rail. "God keep us, but already my bones feel damp within me, and from the inside wet my flesh. I misdoubt me that I disobey my God in obeying him!"

"Stand by to sway me up!" cried Ahab, advancing to the hempen basket. "We should meet him soon."

"Aye, aye, sir," and straightway Starbuck did Ahab's bidding, and once more Ahab swung on high.

A whole hour now passed; gold-beaten out to ages. Time itself now held long breaths with keen suspense. But at last, some three points off the weather bow, Ahab descried the spout again, and instantly

from the three mast-heads three shrieks went up as if the tongues of fire had voiced it.

"Forehead to forehead I meet thee, this third time, Moby Dick! On deck there!—brace sharper up; crowd her into the wind's eye. He's too far off to lower yet, Mr. Starbuck. The sails shake! Stand over that helmsman with a top-maul! So, so; he travels fast, and I must down. But let me have one more good round look aloft here at the sea; there's time for that. An old, old sight, and yet somehow so young; aye, and not changed a wink since I first saw it, a boy, from the sand-hills of Nantucket! The same!—the same!—the same to Noah as to me. There's a soft shower to leeward. Such lovely leewardings! They must lead somewhere—to something else than common land, more palmy than the palms. Leeward! the white whale goes that way; look to windward, then; the better if the bitterer quarter. But good-bye, good-bye, old mast-head! What's this?—green? aye, tiny mosses in these warped cracks. No such green weather stains on Ahab's head! There's the difference now between man's old age and matter's. But aye, old mast, we both grow old together; sound in our hulls, though, are we not, my ship? Aye, minus a leg, that's all. By heaven this dead wood has the better of my live flesh every way. I can't compare with it; and I've known some ships made of dead trees outlast the lives of men made of the most vital stuff of vital fathers. What's that he said? he should still go before me, my pilot; and yet to be seen again? But where? Will I have eyes at the bottom of the sea, supposing I descend those endless stairs? and all night I've been sailing from him, wherever he did sink to. Aye, aye, like many more thou told'st direful truth as touching thyself, O Parsee; but, Ahab, there thy shot fell short. Good-bye, mast-head—keep a good eye upon the whale, the while I'm gone. We'll talk to-morrow, nay, to-night, when the white whale lies down there, tied by head and tail."

He gave the word; and still gazing round him, was steadily lowered through the cloven blue air to the deck.

In due time the boats were lowered; but as standing in his shallop's stern, Ahab just hovered upon the point of the descent, he waved to the mate,—who held one of the tackle-ropes on deck—and bade him pause.

"Starbuck!"

"Sir?"

"For the third time my soul's ship starts upon this voyage, Starbuck."

"Aye, sir, thou wilt have it so."

"Some ships sail from their ports, and ever afterwards are missing, Starbuck!"

"Truth, sir: saddest truth."

"Some men die at ebb tide; some at low water; some at the full of the flood;—and I feel now like a billow that's all one crested comb, Starbuck. I am old;—shake hands with me, man."

Their hands met; their eyes fastened; Starbuck's tears the glue.

"Oh, my captain, my captain!—noble heart—go not—go not!—see, it's a brave man that weeps; how great the agony of the persuasion then!"

"Lower away!"—cried Ahab, tossing the mate's arm from him. "Stand by the crew!"

In an instant the boat was pulling round close under the stern.

"The shaks! the sharks!" cried a voice from the low cabin-window there; "O master, my master, come back!"

But Ahab heard nothing; for his own voice was high-lifted then; and the boat leaped on.

Yet the voice spake true; for scarce had he pushed from the ship, when numbers of sharks, seemingly rising from out the dark waters beneath the hull, maliciously snapped at the blades of the oars, every time they dipped in the water; and in this way accompanied the boat with their bites. It is a thing not uncommonly happening to the whale-boats in those swarming seas; the sharks at times apparently following them in the same prescient way that vultures hover over the banners of marching regiments in the east. But these were the first sharks that had been observed by the *Pequod* since the White Whale had been first descried; and whether it was that Ahab's crew were all such tiger-yellow barbarians, and therefore their flesh more musky to the senses of the sharks—a matter sometimes well known to affect them,—however it was, they seemed to follow that one boat without molesting the others.

"Heart of wrought steel!" murmured Starbuck, gazing over the side, and following with his eyes the receding boat—"canst thou yet ring boldly to that sight?—lowering thy keel among ravening sharks, and followed by them, open-mouthed to the chase; and this the critical third day?—For when three days flow together in one continuous intense pursuit, be sure the first is the morning, the second the noon, and the third the evening and the end of that thing—be that end what it may. Oh! my God! what is this that shoots through me, and leaves me so deadly calm, yet expectant,—fixed at the top of a shudder! Future things swim before me, as in empty outlines and skeletons; all the past is somehow grown dim. Mary, girl! thou fadest in pale glories behind me;

boy! I seem to see but thy eyes grown wondrous blue. Strangest problems of life seem clearing; but clouds sweep between—is my journey's end coming? My legs feel faint; like his who has footed it all day. Feel thy heart—beats it yet? Stir thyself, Starbuck!—stave it off—move, move! speak aloud!—Mast-head there! See ye my boy's hand on the hill?—Crazed;—aloft there!—keep thy keenest eye upon the boats:—mark well the whale!—Ho! again!—dive off that hawk! sec! he pecks—he tears the vane"—pointing to the red flag flying at the main-truck—"Ha! he soars away with it!—Where's the old man now? see'st thou that sight, oh Ahab!—shudder, shudder!"

The boats had not gone very far, when by a signal from the mast-heads—a downward pointed arm, Ahab knew that the whale had sounded; but intending to be near him at the next rising, he held on his way a little sideways from the vessel; the becharmed crew maintaining the profoundest silence, as the head-beat waves hammered and hammered against the opposing bow.

"Drive, drive in your nails, oh ye waves! to their uttermost heads drive them in! ye but strike a thing without a lid; and no coffin and no hearse can be mine:—and hemp only can kill me! Ha! ha!"

Suddenly the waters around them slowly swelled in broad circles; then quickly upheaved, as if sideways sliding from a submerged berg of ice, swiftly rising to the surface. A low rumbling sound was heard; a subterraneous hum; and then all held their breaths; as bedraggled with trailing ropes, and harpoons, and lances, a vast form shot lengthwise, but obliquely from the sea. Shrouded in a thin drooping veil of mist, it hovered for a moment in the rainbowed air; and then fell swamping back into the deep. Crushed thirty feet upwards, the waters flashed for an instant like heaps of fountains, then brokenly sank in a shower of flakes, leaving the circling surface creamed like new milk round the marble trunk of the whale.

"Give way!" cried Ahab to the oarsmen, and the boats darted forward to the attack; but maddened by yesterday's fresh irons that corroded in him, Moby Dick seemed combinedly possessed by all the angels that fell from heaven. The wide tiers of welded tendons overspreading his broad white forehead, beneath the transparent skin, looked knitted together; as head on, he came churning his tail among the boats; and once more flailed them apart; spilling out the irons and lances from the two mates' boats, and dashing in one side of the upper part of their bows, but leaving Ahab's almost without a scar.

While Daggoo and Queequeg were stopping the strained planks; and

as the whale swimming out from them, turned, and showed one entire flank as he shot by them again; at that moment a quick cry went up. Lashed round and round to the fish's back; pinioned in the turns upon turns in which, during the past night, the whale had reeled the involutions of the lines around him, the half-torn body of the Parsee was seen; his sable raiment frayed to shreds; his distended eyes turned full upon old Ahab.

The harpoon dropped from his hand.

"Befooled, befooled!"—drawing in a long lean breath—"Aye, Parsee! I see thee again.—Aye, and thou goest before; and this, *this* then is the hearse that thou didst promise. But I hold thee to the last letter of thy word. Where is the second hearse? Away, mates, to the ship! those boats are useless now; repair them if ye can in time, and return to me; if not, Ahab is enough to die.—Down, men! the first thing that but offers to jump from this boat I stand in, that thing I harpoon. Ye are not other men, but my arms and my legs; and so obey me.—Where's the whale? gone down again?"

But he looked too nigh the boat; for as if bent upon escaping with the corpse he bore, and as if the particular place of the last encounter had been but a stage in his leeward voyage, Moby Dick was now again steadily swimming forward; and had almost passed the ship,—which thus far had been sailing in the contrary direction to him, though for the present her headway had been stopped. He seemed swimming with his utmost velocity, and now only intent upon pursuing his own straight path in the sea.

"Oh! Ahab," cried Starbuck, "not too late is it, even now, the third day, to desist. See! Moby Dick seeks thee not. It is thou, thou, that madly seekest him!"

Setting sail to the rising wind, the lonely boat was swiftly impelled to leeward, by both oars and canvas. And at last when Ahab was sliding by the vessel, so near as plainly to distinguish Starbuck's face as he leaned over the rail, he hailed him to turn the vessel about, and follow him, not too swiftly, at a judicious interval. Glancing upwards he saw Tashtego, Queequeg, and Daggoo, eagerly mounting to the three mast-heads; while the oarsmen were rocking in the two staved boats which had just been hoisted to the side, and were busily at work in repairing them. One after the other, through the port-holes, as he sped, he also caught flying glimpses of Stubb and Flask, busying themselves on deck among bundles of new irons and lances. As he saw all this; as he heard the hammers in the broken boats; far other hammers seemed driving a nail into his

heart. But he rallied. And now marking that the vane or flag was gone from the main-mast-head, he shouted to Tashtego, who had just gained that perch, to descend again for another flag, and a hammer and nails, and so nail it to the mast.

Whether fagged by the three days' running chase, and the resistance to his swimming in the knotted hamper he bore; or whether it was some latent deceitfulness and malice in him: whichever was true, the White Whale's way now began to abate, as it seemed, from the boat so rapidly nearing him once more; though indeed the whale's last start had not been so long a one as before. And still as Ahab glided over the waves the unpitiful sharks accompanied him; and so pertinaciously stuck to the boat; and so continually bit at the plying oars, that the blades became jagged and crunched, and left small splinters in the sea, at almost every dip.

"Heed them not! those teeth but give new rowlocks to your oars. Pull on! 'tis the better rest, the shark's jaw than the yielding water."

"But at every bite, sir, the thin blades grow smaller and smaller!"

"They will last long enough! pull on!—But who can tell!"—he muttered—"whether these sharks swim to feast on the whale or on Ahab?—But pull on! Aye, all alive, now—we near him. The helm! take the helm! let me pass,"—and so saying, two of the oarsmen helped him forward to the bows of the still flying boat.

At length as the craft was cast to one side, and ran ranging along with the White Whale's flank, he seemed strangely oblivious of its advance—as the whale sometimes will—and Ahab was fairly within the smoky mountain mist, which, thrown off from the whale's spout, curled round his great Monadnock hump; he was even thus close to him; when, with body arched back, and both arms lengthwise high-lifted to the poise, he darted his fierce iron, and his far fiercer curse into the hated whale. As both steel and curse sank to the socket, as if sucked into a morass, Moby Dick sideways writhed; spasmodically rolled his nigh flank against the bow, and, without staving a hole in it, so suddenly canted the boat over, that had it not been for the elevated part of the gunwale to which he then clung, Ahab would once more have been tossed into the sea. As it was, three of the oarsmen—who foreknew not the precise instant of the dart, and were therefore unprepared for its effects—these were flung out; but so fell, that, in an instant, two of them clutched the gunwale again, and rising to its level on a combing wave, hurled themselves bodily inboard again; the third man helplessly dropping astern, but still afloat and swimming.

Almost simultaneously, with a mighty volition of ungraduated, instantaneous swiftness, the White Whale darted through the weltering sea. But when Ahab cried out to the steersman to take new turns with the line, and hold it so; and commanded the crew to turn round on their seats, and tow the boat up to the mark; the moment the treacherous line felt that double strain and tug, it snapped in the empty air!

"What breaks in me? Some sinew cracks!—'tis whole again; oars! oars! Burst in upon him!"

Hearing the tremendous rush of the sea-crashing boat, the whale wheeled round to present his blank forehead at bay; but in that evolution, catching sight of the nearing black hull of the ship; seemingly seeing in it the source of all his persecutions; bethinking it—it may be—a larger and nobler foe; of a sudden, he bore down upon its advancing prow, smiting his jaws amid fiery showers of foam.

Ahab staggered; his hand smote his forehead. "I grow blind; hands! stretch out before me that I may yet grope my way. Is't night?"

"The whale! The ship!" cried the cringing oarsmen.

"Oars! oars! Slope downwards to thy depths, O sea, that ere it be for ever too late, Ahab may slide this last, last time upon his mark! I see: the ship! the ship! Dash on, my men! will ye not save my ship?"

But as the oarsmen violently forced their boat through the sledge-hammering seas, the before whale-smitten bow-ends of two planks burst through, and in an instant almost, the temporarily disabled boat lay nearly level with the waves; its half-wading, splashing crew trying hard to stop the gap and bale out the pouring water.

Meantime, for that one beholding instant, Tashtego's mast-head hammer remained suspended in his hand; and the red flag, half-wrapping him as with a plaid, then streamed itself straight out from him, as his own forward-flowing heart; while Starbuck and Stubb, standing upon the bowsprit beneath, caught sight of the down-coming monster just as soon as he.

"The whale, the whale! Up helm, up helm! Oh, all ye sweet powers of air, now hug me close! Let not Starbuck die, if die he must, in a woman's fainting fit. Up helm, I say—ye fools, the jaw! the jaw! Is this the end of all my bursting prayers? all my lifelong fidelities? Oh Ahab, Ahab, lo, thy work. Steady! helmsman, steady. Nay, nay! Up helm again! He turns to meet us! Oh, his unappearing brow drives on towards one, whose duty tells him he cannot depart. My God, stand by me now!"

"Stand not by me, but stand under me, whoever you are that will

now help Stubb; for Stubb, too, sticks here. I grin at thee, thou grinning whale! Who ever helped Stubb, or kept Stubb awake, but Stubb's own unwinking eye? And now poor Stubb goes to bed upon a mattress that is all too soft; would it were stuffed with brushwood! I grin at thee, thou grinning whale! Look ye, sun, moon, and stars! I call ye assassins of as good a fellow as ever spouted up his ghost. For all that, I would yet ring glasses with thee, would ye but hand the cup! Oh, oh! oh, oh! thou grinning whale, but there'll be plenty of gulping soon! Why fly ye not, O Ahab! For me, off shoes and jacket to it; let Stubb die in his drawers! A most mouldy and over-salted death, though;—cherries! cherries! cherries! Oh, Flask, for one red cherry ere we die!"

"Cherries? I only wish that we were where they grow. Oh, Stubb, I hope my poor mother's drawn my part-pay ere this; if not, few coppers will now come to her, for the voyage is up."

From the ship's bows, nearly all the seamen now hung inactive; hammers, bits of plank, lances, and harpoons, mechanically retained in their hands, just as they had darted from their various employments; all their enchanted eyes intent upon the whale, which from side to side strangely vibrating his predestinating head, sent a broad band of over-spreading semicircular foam before him as he rushed. Retribution, swift vengeance, eternal malice were in his whole aspect, and spite of all that mortal man could do, the solid white buttress of his forehead smote the ship's starboard bow, till men and timbers reeled. Some fell flat upon their faces. Like dislodged trucks, the heads of the harpooners aloft shook on their bull-like necks. Through the breach, they heard the waters pour, as mountain torrents down a flume.

"The ship! The hearse!—the second hearse!" cried Ahab from the boat; "its wood could only be American!"

Diving beneath the settling ship, the whale ran quivering along its keel; but turning under water, swiftly shot to the surface again, far off the other bow, but within a few yards of Ahab's boat, where, for a time, he lay quiescent.

"I turn my body from the sun. What ho, Tashtego! let me hear thy hammer. Oh! ye three unsundered spires of mine; thou uncracked keel; and only god-bullied hull; thou firm deck, and haughty helm, and Pole-pointed prow,—death-glorious ship! must ye then perish, and without me? Am I cut off from the last fond pride of meanest shipwrecked captains? Oh, lonely death on lonely life! Oh, now I feel my topmost greatness lies in my topmost grief. Ho, ho! from all your

furthest bounds, pour ye now in, ye bold billows of my whole foregone life, and top this one piled comber of my death! Towards thee I roll, thou all-destroying but unconquering whale; to the last I grapple with thee; from hell's heart I stab at thee; for hate's sake I spit my last breath at thee. Sink all coffins and all hearses to one common pool! and since neither can be mine, let me then tow to pieces, while still chasing thee, though tied to thee, thou damned whale! *Thus, I give up the spear!*"

The harpoon was darted; the stricken whale flew forward; with igniting velocity the line ran through the groove;—ran foul. Ahah stooped to clear it; he did clear it; but the flying turn caught him round the neck, and voicelessly as Turkish mutes bowstring their victim, he was shot out of the boat, ere the crew knew he was gone. Next instant, the heavy eye-splice in the rope's final end flew out of the stark-empty tub, knocked down an oarsman, and smiting the sea, disappeared in its depths.

For an instant, the tranced boat's crew stood still; then turned. "The ship? Great God, where is the ship?" Soon they through dim, bewildering mediums saw her sidelong fading phantom, as in the gaseous *Fata Morgana*; only the uppermost masts out of water; while fixed by infatuation, or fidelity, or fate, to their once lofty perches, the pagan harpooneers still maintained their sinking lookouts on the sea. And now, concentric circles seized the lone boat itself, and all its crew, and each floating oar, and every lance-pole, and spinning, animate and inanimate, all round and round in one vortex, carried the smallest chip of the *Pequod* out of sight.

But as the last whelmings intermixingly poured themselves over the sunken head of the Indian at the mainmast, leaving a few inches of the erect spar yet visible, together with long streaming yards of the flag, which calmly undulated, with ironical coincidings, over the destroying billows they almost touched;—at that instant, a red arm and a hammer hovered backwardly uplifted in the open air, in the act of nailing the flag faster and yet faster to the subsiding spar. A sky-hawk that tauntingly had followed the main-truck downwards from its natural home among the stars, pecking at the flag, and incommoding *Tashtego* there; this bird now chanced to intercept its broad fluttering wing between the hammer and the wood; and simultaneously feeling that ethereal thrill, the submerged savage beneath, in his death-gasp, kept his hammer frozen there; and so the bird of heaven, with archangelic shrieks, and his imperial beak thrust upwards, and his whole captive form folded in the flag of Ahab, went down with his ship, which, like Satan, would not sink to

hell till she had dragged a living part of heaven along with her, and helmeted herself with it.

Now small fowls flew screaming over the yet yawning gulf; a sullen white surf beat against its steep sides; then all collapsed, and the great shroud of the sea rolled on as it rolled five thousand years ago.

"HEY RUBE!"

(FROM "RED WAGON," BY LADY ELEANOR SMITH)

The scene is laid on the circus ground at Thompsonville, in America. The inhabitants of this and a neighbouring village are incensed because they have been swindled by the "side-show fakirs." "Rube" is the equivalent of "rustic."

SOME of the waiting men held flaming torches now, and these brands flickered furiously over their faces, which seemed set and cruel and diabolic in the wild red light. Joe heard the band from the tent crash out the overture, and he saw streams of country-people jostling outside the marquee, which would not be opened to them for about five minutes.

Then, as though he had been playing a part which had been carefully rehearsed, one of the strangers from Moscow walked nonchalantly across to the Big Top and producing a wicked-looking Barlow knife, deliberately hacked away one of the ropes from its staub. For a moment there was silence so complete as to give the illusion that the circus held its breath. Then twenty unknowns sprang forward, twenty Barlows flashed, and for a moment, it seemed, the Big Top actually swayed, tottering like a great captive balloon. Cowboy Charlie, who waited outside, knew then that nothing would save the show that evening. Cupping his mouth with his hand, he bawled with all the strength of his powerful lungs the terrible battle-cry of the circus: "Hey Rube! Come on, you fellows, now! Hey Rube! Hey Rube!"

A revolver cracked viciously. A hundred throats took up the war-cry, and "Hey Rube!" was yelled by the tent-men and crooks until it reverberated far across the river. Then, inevitably, they were at each other's throats, fighting like wild animals—kicking, biting, scratching, tearing.

The good people of Thompsonville required but little time to grasp the state of affairs. During the first few minutes the women

and children were hurried away to the street and pushed into their buggies; then, like avenging fiends, the men of Thompsonville returned to the fight. At first they were prejudiced against the men of Moscow, whom they accused, not altogether unreasonably, of spoiling their evening's entertainment, and the night would certainly have ended in a glorious victory for the circus had it not been for an oratorical effort on the part of a big, square-shouldered, grey-headed man who acted as leader and spokesman for his town. Leaping upon the roof of a wagon while the fight was raging savagely beneath him, this individual addressed the struggling, desperate, ferocious crowd in a voice as loud as the roar of a bull. Although his body offered an easy target to the army of crooks and circus-men below, he appeared as cool and self-possessed as though he were addressing a church meeting in his own kitchen.

"Hi! You fellows from Thompsonville, just you listen to me for five minutes before you start in on us chaps from Moscow! Hold on for a moment while I tell you just what this circus is and the way some of the folks acted way back in our town! Do you know what they are, this Cowboy Charlie gang? Do you know what you're paying good money to see? I reckon you don't, else you'd ride 'em out of town pretty quick. They're nothing but a gang of bum, or'nery, low-down dirty rascals, that's what they are, that swindle every town down the river and make their get-away quick as they can next morning!"

His powerful voice rang out above the yells and shouts and oaths of a whiskey-maddened crowd. For a moment hostilities ceased, and the roughs of Thompsonville paused, indecisive, while the avengers from Moscow, gripping their weapons, edged close to the wagon as though to protect their chief. A circus-hand climbed up to the van with an enormous hammer in his hand, probably to deal summary execution upon the inconvenient babbler, and a citizen of Thompsonville, seizing him by the foot, sent him flying headlong beneath the boots of Moscow. In a few moments he was no longer a man, but crushed and bleeding pulp. Toying carelessly with his revolver, the Muscovite leader continued his oration.

"That's mighty good, my Thompsonville friend, but it ain't enough, not by no manner o' means. We got to find this Doctor Mulligan, of the medicine show, that charges a dollar for a bottle of water and cochineal—yes, I know that's a fact because I had it analysed by our Doc. Adams, whose word should be good enough for all of you boys here to-night. We got to find Spike Ryan, that gets us boobs to

play the thimble game, the ginger-headed rapsallion that sells crooked lottery tickets in the interval, the bum that plays cards with aces up his sleeve, the loaded dicer, the fellow that short-changes you at the ticket-box of the circus, and, worse than any of 'em, to my mind Cowboy Charlie, head of the gang, that takes money from rogues to run his swindling circus! Oh, we'll find 'em all right, don't worry, and when we find 'em, what are we goin' to *do* with 'em, anyhow? Any gentleman got a suggestion to make?"

There was silence for a moment while various citizens of Thompsonville recollected the curious lack of success enjoyed during their earlier gambling efforts that afternoon. Then someone arrived at the obvious solution, and yelled his proposal. After all, one show was as good as another.

"To the river! To the river with Cowboy Charlie and his gang! Lynch 'em! Lynch the whole gang!"

Crack! Cowboy Charlie, still concealed behind the flap of a tent, raised his revolver and shot the grey-headed orator through the brain with as little emotion as though he were killing a rabbit. Then, once again, the voice of the circus: "Hey Rube! Come on, you fellows! Kill 'em!"

A roar of confusion and fury and pain as the two towns and the entire circus, yelling and whooping and bellowing like redskins on the warpath, met in the terrible shock of primitive, wild-cat, hysterical combat. They swarmed and jostled, slashing at each other with knives, cracking skulls with sticks and hammers, hitting wildly with their fists and the butt-ends of their revolvers, kicking savagely with their nailed boots and trampling beneath their feet, jumping crazily up and down upon the faces of their fallen enemies. If a man stumbled and slipped in this crowd, he was done for. It is unknown, even to this day, on which side the men of Thompsonville fought, but it is supposed, probably with some justification, that, so blind were they with whiskey, they assaulted, with equal fervour, the associates of Cowboy Charlie and their own neighbours from Moscow.

THE BLACK KILLER

(FROM "OWD BOB," BY ALFRED OLLIVANT)

The countryside has been roused by the depredations of a sheepdog, turned "killer," and suspicion falls on Red Wull, who, with his master the sardonic little Scotsman M'Adam, is a pariah in the community. At last Wull's guilt is made clear, even to his master, but M'Adam's grief wins the only other witness to promise to keep his discovery secret, trusting to M'Adam's sense of honour to have the dog destroyed. The next morning finds a crowd of shepherds and their dogs in the parlour of the "Dalesman's Daughter," where a sheep-auction is to be held. Apart from them sits M'Adam, brooding. Wull is in the paddock.

TEDDY BOLSTOCK interrupted, lifting his hand for silence.

"Heark! thunder."

They listened. From without came a gurgling, jarring roar, dreadful to hear.

"It's coomin' nearer."

"Nay, it's gangin' away."

"No thunder that."

"Mair like t' Lea in flood. And yet—— Eh, Mr. M'Adam, what is it?"

The little man had moved at last. He was on his feet, staring about him, wild-eyed.

"Where's yer dogs?" he screamed.

"Here's mi—— Nay, by thunder! but he's not," was the astonished cry.

In the interest of the story no man had noticed that his dog had risen from his side; no one had noticed a file of shaggy figures creeping out of the room.

"I tell ye it's the tykes! I tell ye it's the tykes! They're on ma Wullie—fifty to one they're on him! My God! my God! and me not there! . . . Wullie, Wullie!" in a scream, "I'm wi' ye!"

At the same moment Bessie Bolstock rushed in, white-faced.

"Hi, father! Mr. Saunderson! all o' you! T' tykes fightin' mad! Hearn!"

There was no time for that. Each man seized his stick and rushed for the door; and M'Adam led them all.

A rare thing it was for the little man and his Red Wull to be apart. So rare that others besides the men in that little tap-room noticed it.

Saunderson's old Shep walked quietly to the back-door and looked out. There on the slope below him he saw what he sought, stalking up and down, gaunt and grim, like a lion at feeding-time. And as the old dog watched, his tail was slowly swaying as though he were well pleased.

He walked back into the tap-room just as Teddy began his tale. Twice he made the round of the room, silently-footed. From dog to dog he went, stopping at each as though urging him on to some great enterprise; then he made for the door again, looking back to see if any followed.

One by one the others rose and trailed out after him: big blue Rasper; Londesley's Lassie; Ned Hoppin's young dog; Grip and Grapple, the publican's bull-terriers; Jim Mason's Gyp, foolish and flirting even now; others there were; and last of all, waddling in the rear, that scarred Amazon, the Venus.

Out of the house they pattered, silent and unseen, with murder in their hearts. At last they had found their enemy alone. And slowly, in a black cloud, like the Shadow of Death, they dropped down the slope upon him.

And he saw them coming, knew their errand, as who should better than the Terror of the Border, and was glad. Death it might be, and such an one as he would wish to die; at least distraction from that long-drawn, haunting pain. And he grinned as he looked at the approaching crowd and saw there was not one there but he had humbled in his time.

He ceased his restless pacing, and awaited them. His great head was high as he scanned them contemptuously, daring them to come on.

And on they came, marching slow and silent like soldiers at a funeral: young and old; bob-tailed and bull; terrier and collie, flocking like vultures to the dead. And the Venus, heavy with years, rolled after them on her bandy legs, panting in her hurry lest she should be late: for had she not the blood of her blood to avenge?

So they came about him, slow, certain, murderous, opening out to cut him off on every side.

There was no need. He never thought to move. Long odds 'twould be—crushingly heavy; yet he loved them for it, and was trembling already with the glory of the coming fight.

They were up to him now; the sheep-dogs walking round him on their toes, stiff and short like cats on coals; their backs a little humped, heads averted, yet eyeing him askance.

And he remained stock still, nor looked at them. His great chin was cocked, his muzzle wrinkled in a dreadful grin. As he stood there, shivering a little, eyes rolling back, breath grating in his throat to set every bristle on edge, he looked infernal.

The Venus ranged alongside him. No preliminary stage for her: she never walked where she could stand or stood where she could lie. But stand she must now, breathing hard through her nose, never taking her eyes off that pad she had marked for her own. Close beside her were crop-eared Grip and Grapple, looking up at the line above them where hairy neck and shoulder joined. Behind was big Rasper, and close to him, Lassie. Of the others each had marked his place, each taken up his post.

Last of all, old Shep took his stand full in front of his enemy, their shoulders almost rubbing, head past head.

So the two stood a moment, as though whispering; each diabolical, each rolling back red eyes to watch the other; while from the little mob there rose a snarling, bubbling snore, like giants wheezing in their sleep.

Then like lightning each struck. Rearing high, they wrestled with striving paws and the expression of fiends incarnate. Down they went, Shep underneath, and the great dog with a dozen of these wolves of hell upon him. Rasper, devilish, was riding on his back; the Venus—well for him—had struck and missed; but Grip and Grapple had their hold; and the others, like leaping demoniacs, were plunging into the whirlpool vortex of the fight.

And there, where a fortnight before he had fought and lost the battle of the Cup, Red Wull now battled for his life.

Long odds: but what cared he? The long-drawn agony of the night was drowned in that glorious delirium; the hate of years came bubbling forth. In that supreme moment he would avenge his wrongs on humanity. And he went in to fight, revelling like a giant in the red lust of killing.

Long odds. Never before had he faced such a galaxy of foes. His one chance lay in quickness: to prevent the swarming crew getting their hold till at least he had diminished them.

Then it was a sight to see the great brute, huge as a bull-calf, strong as a bull, rolling over and over and up again quick as a kitten; leaping here, striking there; shaking himself free; swinging his quarters; fighting with feet and body and teeth—every inch of him at war. More than once he broke through the ruck; only to turn again. No flight for him, nor thought of it.

Up and down the slope the dark mass tossed, like some hulk the sport of waves. Black and white, sable and grey, worrying at that great centrepiece; up and down, roaming wide, leaving everywhere a trail of red.

Gyp he had pinned and hurled across his shoulder. Grip followed: he shook her till she rattled, then flung her afar; and she fell with a horrible thud, not to rise; while Grapple, the death to avenge, hung tighter. In a scarlet soaking patch of the gound lay Kirby's lurcher, doubled up in a dreadful ball. And Hoppin's young dog, who three hours before had been playing tenderly with the children, now fiendish to look on, dragged after the huddle up the hill. Back the mob rolled on her. When it was passed she lay quite still, grinning, a handful of tawny hair and flesh in her dead mouth.

So they fought on. And ever and anon a great figure rose up from the inferno all around, rearing to his full height, his head all ragged and bleeding, the red foam dripping from his jaws. Thus he would appear momentarily, like some dark rock amidst a raging sea; and down he would go again.

Silent now they fought, dumb and determined. Only you might have heard the rend and rip of tearing flesh; a hoarse gurgle as some dog went down; the panting of dry throats; and now and then a sob from that central figure. He was fighting for his life. The Terror of the Border was at bay.

All who meant it were on him now. The Venus had her hold at last; and never but once in a long life of battles had she let go; Rasper, his breath coming in dreadful rattles, clipped him horribly by the loins; while a dozen other devils with hot eyes and wrinkled nostrils clung still.

Long odds. And down he went, smothered beneath the weight of numbers, yet struggled up again; his great head torn and dripping, eyes a gleam of rolling red and white, the little tail stern and stiff like

the stump of a flagstaff shot away. He was desperate but indomitable; and he sobbed as he fought doggedly on.

Long odds: it could not last. And down he went at length, silent still—never a cry should they wring from him in his agony: the Venus glued to that mangled pad; Rasper beneath him now; three at his throat; two at his ears; a crowd on flanks and body.

The Terror of the Border was overwhelmed at last.

"Wullie! ma Wullie!" screamed M'Adam, bounding down the slope a crook's length in front of the rest. "Wullie! Wullie! to me!"

At the cry the huddle below was convulsed. It heaved and swayed and dragged to and fro, like the sea lashed into life by some dying Leviathan.

A gigantic figure, tawny and red, fought its way to the surface. A great tossing head, gory past recognition, flung out from the ruck. One quick glance he shot from ragged eyes at the little flying figure in front; then with a roar like a waterfall plunged towards it, shaking off the bloody leeches as he went.

"Wullie! Wullie! I'm wi' ye!" cried that little voice, now so near.

Through—through—through! an incomparable effort, and his last.

They hung to his throat, they clung to his muzzle, they were round and about him.

Down he went again with a sob and a little suffocating cry, shooting up at his master one quick beseeching glance as the sea of blood closed over him—worrying, smothering, tearing, like foxhounds at the kill.

They left the dead, and pulled away the living. And it was no light task; for the pack were mad for blood.

At the bottom of the wet mess of hair and red and flesh was old Shep, stone-dead. And as Saunderson pulled the body out, his face was working; for no man can lose in a crack the friend of a dozen years and remain unmoved.

The Venus lay there, her teeth clenched still in death; smiling that her vengeance was achieved. Big Rasper, blue no longer, was gasping out his life. Two more came crawling out to find a quiet spot where they might lay them down to die. Before the night had fallen another had gone to his account; while not a dog who fought upon that day but carried the scars of it to his grave. The Terror

o' th' Border, terrible in his life, like Samson, was yet more terrible *in his dying*.

Down at the bottom lay that which once had been Adam M'Adam's Red Wull.

At the sight the little man neither raved nor swore: it was past that for him. He sat down, heedless of the soaking ground, and took the mangled head in his lap, very tenderly.

"They've done ye at last, Wullie—they've done ye at last," he muttered, convinced that the attack had been organized while he was detained in the tap-room.

On hearing that little voice, the dog gave one weary wag of his stump-tail. And with that, the Tailless Tyke, Adam M'Adam's Red Wull, the Black Killer, went to his long home.

THE BATTLE OF THE OXFORD ROAD

(FROM "SEVENTY YEARS A SHOWMAN," BY LORD GEORGE SANGER)

James Sanger, the father of Lord George, was a farmer and tool-maker. At the age of 18 he was impressed into the Navy, and saw service on the "Victory" at the Battle of Trafalgar. After ten years' absence, he returned to England with an annual pension of £10, and finding his relatives disinclined to help him, became a "peep-show" itinerant at the fairs. He prospered, extended his operations, and became a showman.

As I have said, my father had manufactured a very primitive kind of roundabout, which he carried with him as an adjunct to his peep-show. The horses were enlarged examples of the rough penny toys that please the little ones even now. Their legs were simply stiff round sticks. Their bodies were lumps of deal rounded on one side. Their heads were roughly cut from half-inch deal boards, and inserted in a groove in the bodies, while the tails and manes were made of strips of rabbit-skin. They were gaudy animals, however, their coats of paint being white, plentifully dotted with red and blue spots. Motive power was obtained from the boys at the fairs, who, having no half-pennies of their own, were always ready to push round their luckier companions for the reward of a ride later on.

My first vivid recollection of going out with this machine and with the peep-show and caravan dates from when I was five years old. It is fixed in my memory because of the great fight between the showmen on the Oxford road—a fight, by the way, that nearly cost the lives of my brother William and myself.

The first fair of the year was always the May-day gathering at Reading, and showmen of all descriptions moved out of their winter quarters to attend it. We, of course, went from Newbury, with everything spick and span, to attract the public who thronged the place, the fair extending at that time right away down to the riverside, through

the whole of the Forbury. This particular year, namely 1833, the collection of larger shows was unusually great, all the giants of the profession at that day—Wombwell, Nelson Lee, Hilton, Randall, Taylor, and the rest—being there in full strength. We had pitched on a very good position, and did excellent business, little expecting what was to follow.

Directly Reading fair was over—it only lasted for one day—all the showmen used to pack up as hurriedly as possible, and taking little or no rest, made as rapidly as possible to Henley for the fair there on May 3rd. At this time Wombwell's and Hilton's were the two great menageries, and engaged in deadly rivalry. Wombwell's No. 1 collection—for he had two smaller ones—was at Reading fair, and rejoiced in the possession of a giraffe, a rhinoceros, and two elephants, as well as the usual lions, tigers, and smaller carnivora. Against these extra attractions, Hilton's, a very good ordinary collection, could only set an enormous elephant, weighing three tons; and jealousy grew apace.

Wombwell's got away from Reading first, closely followed by Hilton's, and behind the latter came a motley string of shows. There was Nelson Lee, with his original Richardson's Booth; Fred Randall, "The Giant"; Sam Taylor, from Ilkeston; another very tall man showing as a giant; "Fat Tom," an enormous personage, exhibited as "the heaviest man on earth"; "Skinny Jack," the North American "Living Skeleton," with the big Holden booth; "Bob," the armless man, who painted pictures with his feet; and many others, including our humble selves—each show having a little army of assistants and hangers-on.

About two miles from Reading, on the Oxford road, the trouble began. Hilton's drivers tried to pass Wombwell's, and at Henley it was the first come first served, and those on the ground first secured the best pitches. Wombwell's men drew across the road in such a way as to prevent the passage of their rivals. The wrangle stopped all the shows behind the menageries, as nothing could pass the great animal wagons.

All at once one of Hilton's men knocked one of Wombwell's drivers off his seat with a tent-pole. In a minute all was confusion; grooms, drivers, and carriage attendants of the two menageries left their posts and, catching up any weapon they could lay their hands on—crowbars, tent-poles, whips, etc.—attacked each other with desperate ferocity.

Then the rest of the showmen took sides, for in the profession Hilton's and Wombwell's each had their supporters, and in less than

a quarter of an hour a battle was being waged on the Oxford road, at three in the morning, such as had not been seen since the time of the Civil Wars. Even the freaks took part. The fat man made for the living skeleton with a door-hook; the living skeleton battered at the fat man with a peg mallet. Windows and doors of caravans were smashed, and men were lying about bleeding and senseless from wounds.

While the *mêlée* was at its height there came a terrible diversion. The horses drawing Wombwell's elephants, left unattended, had taken fright at the noise made by the fighting, swearing men, and the wild beasts who, aroused by the combat, added their howling to the din. Rushing madly away, the powerful team had got too close to one of the deep ditches—dykes we called them then—that bordered the road, the wheels of the great van left the level, and, with a crash, the vehicle turned over.

In two minutes the elephants, mad with fright, had smashed the sides of the wagon to splinters, and made their way out, rushing hither and thither, and turning over everything in their path.

Meanwhile I and my brother William, who was two years older than myself, were standing, two little trembling figures, in our night-gowns at the window of our caravan, which lay some hundred yards behind the string of larger shows, trying to make out what was the matter. We were quite alone, for mother had been left in Reading to come on next day, and father, when the row began on the road, had gone to see what it was all about.

All at once something frightened our horse, and he started to run away, with the result that in another minute we suffered the same fate as Wombwell's elephants, and were turned over into the ditch with a crash that set us screaming at the top of our voices with fright. It was just as well that we did scream, for, in falling over, the fire in our caravan was thrown out and set fire to the vehicle. We should inevitably have been burnt to death had not our voices attracted the attention of some country people who were hastening to the scene of the fight, and who, getting water from the ditch, poured it through the broken window, put out the flames and rescued us, bruised, frightened, and wet from our predicament.

When the fight was over several men badly hurt were conveyed back to Reading to the hospital, some of them only to come out again as cripples for life. Others were taken on to Henley to be attended by local doctors, and it was looked upon as little short of a miracle that no lives were lost.

Father, hearing of our accident, soon got back to us, and our wagon, which was not much damaged beyond the breaking of the windows and the scorching of the inside, was got upon the road, and we proceeded on our way.

Wombwell's great elephant van was left all smashed up where it had fallen, and the recaptured elephants were walked into the town. We had a good day after all for business, though it was the sorriest lot of battered performers and damaged caravans that Henley fair had ever witnessed.

I have always felt very thankful for the escape of my brother and myself from death, and though I have had several "close calls" since then, nothing has ever more impressed itself on my mind than the scene I witnessed and the danger I escaped from on that memorable May morning on the Oxford road.

GORILLA v. LION

(FROM "THE SEVEN LOST TRAILS OF AFRICA," BY HEDLEY CHILVERS)

This narrative was added by the publishers to the collection made by Lord Birkenhead, in order to bring the episodes up to the number of fifty.

ONE night, when the rivals were keenly set in friendly contention and the champagne was flowing and the women were listening—there were always women to help men spend money in Beira even then—a stranger from Kivu came to an adjoining table, a tall, grim fellow whose voice had a persuasive ring but whose diffidence somehow suggested the remoteness of the jungle. Two of the fingers of his right hand had been shot away, and he limped as he walked. He listened awhile in silence to the tales that were passing. And when, in the prevalent mood of merriment, someone looked his way and toasted him in champagne (and filled his glass), he also volunteered a yarn and told it with such intensity that it instantly gripped his hearers. It was a yarn of real life indeed.

He told of a battle between a gorilla and a lion in a forest clearing near Kivu. He had watched this fight, he said, from start to finish, and made bold to say that in a long hunting life he had never seen such strength, ferocity, and courage as were then opposed to each other. And this was the way of it.

Night was beginning to fall in the forest when he saw a baby gorilla wandering about in bewildered fashion and uttering curiously human cries. It had lost its way and was sounding its call; for, be it said, gorillas usually go about in families. But, almost simultaneously, the hunter discovered that the little thing was being stalked by a lion. The broad paws of the stalker bespoke immense strength. It was a remorseless beast, of the type that has been known to pull a dead ox over an eight-foot wall. The frightened baby set up a loud and querulous cry. The cry echoed eerily through the grey-

blue vistas of the forest as such cries have echoed there for countless centuries.

And now, out of the trees, there suddenly emerged a giant gorilla. He rose and then crouched as he ambled forth, a sinister apparition with grey, Mephistophelean hair-tufts on the top of his head, his breasts bare and slightly pendulous. He had seen his baby and the lion, and in his rage beat his chest hollowly like a drum, opening wide his mouth, and emitting that appalling roar which is meant to terrify his enemies. The energy required to emit it, so somebody has said, would be sufficient to break a man's neck. Native bearers hearing it from afar have been known to run away and hide. Not so the lion. He crouched no longer, but stood there with twitching mouth and lashing tail. With the prospect of his meal vanishing, he angrily faced the great ape, which was coming to meet him with the formidable waddle that is characteristic of his kind, muzzle thrust down, eyes flashing and deep-set.

But, when only ten yards apart, the lion slowly faced about, trotted in a circle, and charged at full speed towards the ape. The gorilla rose to its full height as the lion sprang, then leaped nimbly aside, and, as the lion passed, gripped it viciously by the hind leg. The grip snapped the limb, but the shock also pulled the man-ape over. The lion twisted fiercely upon its antagonist and a moment later both were locked in a death-grip. Within a few seconds the lion had not only disembowelled the gorilla, but had also lacerated his back, and as the great ape, biting and roaring, relaxed and rolled over inert, the lion, terribly injured and twisted in agony, limped away a few yards, and fell coughing on its side, its neck so fearfully mauled that it bled to death where it lay. And thus came death to each.

This was the real-life drama told by the hunter who came down to Beira in December, 1901, from the Kivu forests, and drank champagne with Rever and Upsher, those old and ever-memorable hunters of the Congo.

VII
IN THE GREAT WAR

AT DELVILLE WOOD

(FROM "MEMOIRS OF AN INFANTRY OFFICER," BY SIEGFRIED SASSOON)

An incident in the Battle of the Somme, as recounted by one who fought that day.

"NEXT day began grey and cheerless; shells screeching overhead, the earth going up in front of the Wood, and twigs falling on my tin hat. When it got near zero, the earth was going up continuously. Boughs were coming down. You couldn't hear the shells coming—simply felt the earth quake when they arrived. There was some sort of smoke-screen but it only let the Boches know we were coming. No one seems able to explain exactly what happened, but the Companies on the left never had a hope. They got enfiladed from Ale Alley, so the Sergeant-Major was right about the "rough house." Edmunds was killed almost at once and his Company and B were knocked to bits as soon as they came out of the Wood. I took C along just behind Perrin and his crowd. We advanced in three rushes. It was nothing but scrambling in and out of shell-holes, with the ground all soft like potting-mould. The broken ground and the slope of the hill saved us a bit from their fire. Bitter Trench was simply like a filled-in ditch where we crossed it. The contact-aeroplane was just over our heads all the time, firing down at the Boches. After the second rush I looked round and saw that a few of the men were hanging back a bit, and no wonder, for a lot of them were only just out from England! I wondered if I ought to go back to them, but the only thing I'd got in my head was a tag from what some instructor had told me when I was a private in the Artists' Rifles before the War. In an attack always keep going forward! Except for that, I couldn't think much; the noise was appalling and I've never had such a dry tongue in my life. I knew one thing, that we must keep up with the barrage. We had over 500 yards to go before the first lift and had been specially told we must follow the barrage close up. It was

a sort of cinema effect; all noise and no noise. One of my runners was shot through the face from Ale Alley; I remember something like a half-brick flying over my head, and the bullets from the enfilade fire sort of smashing the air in front of my face. I saw a man just ahead topple over slowly, almost gracefully, and thought 'poor little chap, that's his last Cup 'Tie.' Anyhow, the two companies were all mixed up by the time we made the third rush, and we suddenly found ourselves looking down into Beer Trench with the Boches kneeling below us. Just on my left, Perrin, on top, and a big Boche, standing in the trench, fired at one another; down went the Boche. Then they cleared off along Vat Alley, and we blundered after them. I saw one of our chaps crumpled up, with a lot of blood on the back of his neck, and I took his rifle and bandolier and went on with Johnson, my runner. The trench had fallen in in a lot of places. They kept turning round and firing back at us. Once, when Johnson was just behind me, he fired (a cool careful shot—both elbows rested) and hit one of them slick in the face; the red jumped out of his face and up went his arms. After that they disappeared. Soon afterwards we were held up by a machine gun firing dead on the trench where it was badly damaged, and took refuge in a big shell-hole that had broken into it. Johnson went to fetch Lewis guns and bombers. I could see four or five heads bobbing up and down a little way off, so I fired at them and never hit one. The rifle I'd got was one of those 'wirer's rifles' which hadn't been properly looked after, and very soon nothing happened when I pressed the trigger, which had come loose somehow and wouldn't fire the charge. I reloaded and tried again, then threw the thing away and got back into the trench. There was a man kneeling with his rifle sticking up, so I thought I'd use that; but as I was turning to take it another peace-time tag came into my head—Never deprive a man of his weapon in a post of danger!

"The next thing I knew was when I came to and found myself remembering a tremendous blow in the throat and right shoulder, and feeling speechless and paralysed. Men were moving to and fro above me. Then there was a wild yell—"They're coming back!" and I was alone. I thought, 'I shall be bombed to bits lying here,' and just managed to get along to where a Lewis gun was firing. I fell down and Johnson came along and cut my equipment off and tied up my throat. Someone put my pistol in my side pocket, but when Johnson got me on to my legs it was too heavy and pulled me over, so he

threw it away. I remember him saying, 'Make way, let him come,' and men saying, 'Good luck, sir'—pretty decent of them under such conditions! Got along the trench and out at the back somehow—everything very hazy—drifting smoke and shell-holes—down the hill—thinking, 'I must get back to Mother'—kept falling down and getting up—Johnson always helping. Got to Battalion headquarters; R.S.M. outside; he took me very gently by the left hand and led me along, looking terribly concerned. Out in the open again at the back of the hill I knew I was safe. Fell down and couldn't get up any more. Johnson disappeared. I felt it was all over with me till I heard his voice saying, 'Here he is,' and the stretcher-bearers picked me up. . . . When I was at the dressing station they took a scrap of paper out of my pocket and read it to me. 'I saved your life under heavy fire'; signed and dated. The stretcher-bearers do that sometimes, I'm told."

THE NIGHT RAIDER

The destruction of a Zeppelin on a bombing raid over England is described by Lieutenant W. J. Tempest, in his official statement to the Air Ministry.

ACKWORTH GRANGE,

15.9.20.

1. In or about the month of September, 1916, I held the rank of 2nd Lieutenant in the R.F.C. and was stationed at Suttons Farm, Hornchurch, in the County of Essex.

2. I was one member of a flight of four other men who included Captain W. L. Robinson and Lieutenant F. Sowrey.

3. Part of our duty was to go on patrol during air raids with a view to intercepting Zeppelins.

4. On the night of September 30th–October 1st, I received orders to stand by about 7 p.m., and at 10 p.m. I received orders to patrol at an altitude of 8,000 feet.

5. I may mention that in those days the organization of the London defences was practically nil. There were a few detached flights of R.F.C. and A.A. batteries dispersed round the defended area and no form of co-operation was carried out between these two services. Beyond the fact that we were given stand-by orders, and that a certain armament was detailed to be carried by us, pilots practically had to use their own initiative. After many months, and guided by experience in previous air raids, our Flight had condensed our own plan of action to cope with the Zeppelin menace. We came to the conclusion that the most important factor was to attain the maximum possible altitude, and to do this we decided to discard the major part of the armament laid down by the War Office, such as Rankin darts, carcass bombs, Le Prieur rockets, which we regarded as so much unnecessary weight. We decided to rely entirely on the explosive ammunition fired by our Lewis guns. To do this we had to invent many dodges to "throw dust in the eyes" of the higher commands when

inspections of the aerodrome and machines were carried out. Thus after many height tests and much experimenting we got our machines able to attain altitudes of 15,000 feet.

6. An amusing incident occurred, after I had sent in my report of my encounter of the Zeppelin which I destroyed. I stated in this report that my armament consisted solely of Lewis gun and drums of explosive bullets, as I had discarded the remainder, standardized by the War Office owing to its cumbersome nature, which greatly diminished the climbing efficiency of the aeroplane. For this I was severely hauled over the coals, in fact I had dared to destroy a Zeppelin without Le Prieur rockets.

7. Accordingly I left the ground and proceeded to attain as high an altitude as possible. About 11.45 p.m. I found myself over S.W. London at an altitude of 14,500 feet. There was a heavy ground fog on and it was bitterly cold, otherwise the night was beautiful and starlit at the altitude at which I was flying.

8. I was gazing over towards the N.E. of London, where the fog was not quite so heavy, when I noticed all the searchlights in that quarter concentrated in an enormous "pyramid." Following them up to the apex I saw a small cigar-shaped object which I at once recognized as a Zeppelin about 15 miles away, and heading straight for London. Previous to this I had chased many imaginary Zepps only to find they were clouds on nearing them.

9. At first I drew near to my objective very rapidly (as I was on one side of London and it was the other and both heading for the centre of the town); all the time I was having an extremely unpleasant time, as to get to the Zepp I had to pass through a very inferno of bursting shells from the A.A. guns below.

10. All at once, it appeared to me that the Zeppelin must have sighted me, for she dropped all her bombs in one volley, swung round, tilted up her nose and proceeded to race away northwards, climbing rapidly as she went. At the time of dropping her bombs I judged her to be at an altitude of about 11,500 feet. I made after her at all speed at about 15,000 feet altitude, gradually overhauling her. At this period the A.A. fire was intense and I, being about five miles behind the Zeppelin, had an extremely uncomfortable time.

11. At this point misfortune overtook me, for my mechanical pressure pump went wrong and I had to use my hand pump to keep up the pressure in my petrol tank. This exercise at so high an alti-

tude was very exhausting besides occupying an arm, thus giving me "one hand less" to operate with when I commenced to fire.

12. As I dived up with the Zeppelin, to my relief I found that I was free from A.A. fire, for the nearest shells were bursting quite three miles away.

13. The Zeppelin was now nearly 15,000 feet high and mounting rapidly. I therefore decided to dive at her, for though I held a slight advantage in speed, she was climbing like a rocket and leaving me standing. I accordingly gave a tremendous pump at my petrol tank, and dived straight at her, firing a burst straight into her as I came. I let her have another burst as I passed under her and then banking my machine over, sat under her tail, and flying along underneath her, pumped lead into her for all I was worth. I could see tracer bullets flying from her in all directions, but I was too close under her for her to concentrate on me.

14. As I was firing, I noticed her begin to go red inside, like an enormous Chinese lantern, and then a flame shot out of the front part of her and I realized she was on fire.

15. She then shot up about 200 feet, paused, and come roaring down straight on to me before I had time to get out of the way. I nose dived for all I was worth, with the Zepp tearing after me, and expected every minute to be engulfed in the flames. I put my machine into a spin and just managed to corkscrew out of the way as she shot past me, roaring like a furnace.

16. I righted my machine and watched her hit the ground with a shower of sparks. I then proceeded to fire off dozens of green Very's lights in the exuberance of my feelings.

17. I glanced at my watch and saw it was about ten minutes past twelve.

18. I then commenced to feel very sick and giddy and exhausted and had considerable difficulty in finding my way to ground through the fog and landing, in doing which I crashed and cut my head on my machine gun.

19. I duly made my report to headquarters and later on was awarded the D.S.O.

(Signed) W. J. TEMPEST,
Major.

THE LAST FIGHT OF BARON RICHTHOFEN

(FROM "THE RED KNIGHT OF GERMANY," BY FLOYD GIBBONS)

In command of his squadron of red aeroplanes, Baron Richthofen performed amazing deeds of prowess during the Great War. Here is the description of how he was brought down in his last great aerial battle.

ON the morning of April 21, 1918, two young men rolled out of their bunks and took a look at the weather.

The two bunks were about twenty miles apart, but across that twenty miles thousands of men comprising battling units of two enormous military forces were engaged in death grips.

One of the young men was a Canadian. He was twenty-four years old, and a war bird of the Royal Air Force. He awoke with a sick stomach and shattered nerves. He had been living for the past months mainly on brandy and milk, and fighting in the air daily on that diet. He was almost done up. His name was Roy Brown.

The other man was twenty-five-year-old Baron Manfred von Richthofen, the Red Knight of Germany and the Kaiser's deadliest ace.

His eyes were clear, his nerves were steady; he both ate and slept well. Brown and Richthofen had never met, or if they had met, neither knew it. Richthofen had never heard of Brown, but Brown had heard a lot about Richthofen.

Fate knew the life and record of both, and destiny had designated noon of that day for their fatal contact. Brown was due to kill Richthofen at midday over the little village of Sailly-le-Sec, in the valley of the Somme.

Roy Brown had gone from his home in Toronto at the age of twenty to the Wrights' flying school at Dayton, Ohio, there to study aviation at his own expense and risk. He wanted to fly and fight for his country and he learned the first rudiments of how to do it in the United States, which at that time had not entered the war.

With this training, he gained his commission as a flight sub-lieutenant in the Royal Navy on September 1, 1915, and in December of that year sailed from New York for England. He first felt the dangers of flying at Chingford where, while undergoing training, he crashed to the ground and fractured a bone in his spine. It kept him in hospital until the beginning of 1917.

For the rest of that year and until the first of April, 1918, he flew with the Royal Naval Air Squadron No. 9, which was assigned to land duty in France. His unit patrolled the Belgian coast and escorted bombing raids far behind the German lines. The squadron also did photographic and reconnaissance work and offensive patrols over the lines as far south as the British area extended.

Officially, he was credited with having shot down twelve German planes, but his flying comrades believed that this figure did not approach the actual number of enemy machines that were sent to destruction under his guns.

He was known for the modesty of the reports he made concerning his combats. He had both disbelief in, and dislike for, the flyers who made victorious claims after every engagement. He knew how difficult it was to obtain corroboration. He knew that many flyers actually discredited their good work by telling tall stories. Some of his successful engagements were only placed to his credit because they were reported by other observers.

On the first day of the month in which he was to kill Richthofen, Brown was raised to the rank of captain and flight commander in the newly-formed Royal Air Force, which combined the flying services of the Army and the Navy. With a number of other former pilots he was assigned to Squadron 209.

His physical condition was bad. Fourteen months of the strain and uncertainty of constant air-fighting—more than a year of hair-breadth and hair-raising escapes from death—long days and longer nights in the shell-torn war zone, with ears, eyes, and sensibilities shocked by recurrent concussions of high explosive—these, added to irregular hours and diet, exposure to inclement weather, and the daily spectacle of death, suffering and destruction, had left an indelible stamp upon the brain, bone and flesh of this war bird whose youth had been one of peace and tranquillity with never a thought of war.

His nervous system was disorganized, and his stomach was in revolt. He should have been in hospital or some convalescent rest-camp back home in Canada.

No chance of leave for any Allied soldier, unless an actual casualty, those hot days in April, 1918, with the German hordes still pushing down on Amiens. Everybody's shoulder was needed at the wheel—every active human body was needed to fill the gap—even sick men.

When Brown was not in the air, he was in bed, soothing the jumpy nerves and pegging himself with brandy and milk for nourishment. Then up again, twice a day, into the flying-boots and togs, and into the air on the regular patrol.

Squadron 209 kept two appointments every day with the Richthofen circus. Morning and afternoon, they bumped into the flying Baron's aggregation of gaily-decorated Fokker triplanes and Albatross scouts, numbering anywhere from twenty to fifty planes, and flying in various formations under a central command. Richthofen had developed mass manoeuvres for the air, and the British had been forced once more to follow his lead.

The strategy of these manoeuvres prevailed until the opposing air forces came into range of one another's weapons, after which the engagement became a rough-and-tumble affair in three dimensions. This was the "dog-fight," in which the man you got seldom saw you and you seldom saw the one who got you.

The fighting planes could be offensive only in the direction in which they flew; from every other angle they were vulnerable to attack. Shooting one's adversary in the back from any undefended angle was perforce within the ethics of air-fighting.

For several weeks previous to the morning of April 21, Brown had been engaged in a couple of dog-fights a day with various units under Richthofen's command. He had singled out a Fokker triplane with a pale-green fuselage and lavender wings, and each day he and this machine had emerged from the dog-fight together, each circling and whirling, trying to get on the other's tail. Brown's sherry-nosed Sopwith Camel and the unknown German pilot's lavender-winged "tripe" spun out miles of tail chasing, without either opponent gaining the fatal position over the other.

One of Brown's comrades, the Canadian ace, Lieutenant-Colonel W. A. Bishop, V.C., best described the whirl of the dog-fight in the following words: "You fly round and round in cyclonic circles, now a flash of the Hun machines, and then a flash of silver as my squadron commander would whiz by. All the time I would be in the same mix-up myself, every now and then finding a red machine in front of me and getting in a round or two of quick shots. There was no

need to hesitate about firing when the right colour flitted by your nose. Firing one moment, you would have to concentrate all your mind and muscle the next in doing a quick turn to avoid a collision. Then your gun jams and you have to zoom up, and fuss with it to put it right."

Brown's squadron, which was under the command of Major C. H. Butler, was located at Bertangles and was co-operating with the British Fourth Army on the Amiens front.

Richthofen's circus had its principal aerodrome just east of the little village of Cappy. He had slept there the night before, his ears tingling with the congratulations of his flyers upon his eightieth victory of the previous day. In addition to this exultation, he felt particularly happy over the prospect of leave and game-hunting in the Black Forest. This leave was to become effective on the 24th, and he and Lieutenant Hans Joachim Wolff had planned to spend it together. They hoped to be able to fly their machines back to Freiburg or to Speyer, but, in the event of bad weather, had agreed to use the railroad and had purchased tickets for this purpose.

After a light breakfast, the German ace stepped out of his quarters, in front of which a regimental band was playing. It had been sent to the aerodrome by a neighbouring division commander, who offered this serenade with his congratulations upon the eightieth victory.

Richthofen did not like the music. He said it was too loud. With Wolff, he walked away from the band, and together they went to the hangars where mechanics were putting the finishing touches to his plane.

The weather was cold, but there was just the touch of spring in the air. Richthofen noticed that the wind was from the east. This was not so good. German air tactics on the western front had long been devised to take advantage of the westerly winds which prevailed most of the time. It meant that a disabled German plane limping home had the advantage of the wind behind it. It constituted even a greater disadvantage to the British airmen, because, with most of the fighting over the German side, a disabled Englishman had to fight against the west wind when he started back for his own lines.

At the door of the hangar that housed his Fokker, Richthofen stopped to play with a puppy. Someone with a camera snapped him in this act. It was the last photograph taken of him in life. In the air service, this snapshot has been sufficient to reinforce the superstition long held among German flying-men, that it is bad luck to be photographed just before departing for a fight.

A sergeant from among the mechanics came forward with a postcard addressed to his son back in Germany. He had asked Manfred to sign it for him.

"What's the matter? Do you think I won't return?" the ace inquired with a smile, as he signed his name for the last time.

Staffel 11 left the ground at about 11.30 a.m., German time, which corresponds with the English hour of 10.30. It flew in two groups of five planes each.

Richthofen led the first group, which included his cousin Lieutenant von Richthofen who, as a beginner, had been warned to take no chances but carefully to observe how to kill without getting killed. Lieutenant Karjus, Lieutenant Wolff and Sergeant Major Scholz made up the remainder of the group or chain. Staffel 5, also under Richthofen's command, had taken the air at the same time. They flew west towards the front.

Brown's squadron, composed of three flights of five planes each, had taken the air from Bertangles at almost the same hour. The first flight flew in a close V-shaped formation, with Major Butler leading, two planes slightly behind him and at each side, and two others still farther apart and above and behind them.

Flanking the leading flight on the right, but in the same formation, was Captain Brown's flight, he being second in command. A similar unit of five planes flanked the Major's group on the left. This was the squadron's air formation for battle. It was out for trouble.

Up and down the front it flew, taking a methodical patrol beat over the lines which ran north and south. Flying in wide arcs, the squadron gained an altitude of 15,000 feet. The visibility was fair, with few clouds, but Brown soon noticed that Major Butler and five planes of the leading flight were not in sight. Upon this development, the young Canadian assumed command of the two remaining flights and signalled for the flight on the left to take up position behind and above him. With this formation, he headed eastward.

Two miles below Brown a couple of slow-flying reconnaissance planes were taking photographs. They were old R.E. 8's, belonging to No. 3 Australian Squadron. They were flying at about 7,000 feet, and their job was to train their cameras on the German lines around the village of Hamel.

A daring quartette of Australian youngsters manned these antiquated machines. S. G. Garrett, from Melbourne, handled the stick in one plane, with A. V. Barrow operating the cameras. T. L. Simpson,

from Hamilton, flew the second machine, with E. C. Hanks, a Sydney surveyor, manning the rear machine-gun. They were all lieutenants, but Simpson's expert faculty with the flying-controls had won for him the Distinguished Flying Cross.

These were the essential human elements of the impending battle—Richthofen flying west—Brown flying east—the Australians' observation planes flying two miles lower, and all of them converging approximately over the village of Hamel.

The engagement opened when four Fokker triplanes started down to get the old R.E.'s. Simpson and Hanks were first in their path. Hanks jumped from his camera-sights and got into action with the rear machine-gun. Simpson gave the old R.E. her full throttle and manoeuvred for the best defensive position. While the rear Lewis gun was spitting out the last of two hundred rounds of lead, Simpson drove the machine into a cloud, seeking cover.

The Fokker "tripes" continued their swoop, training their Spandaus now on Garrett and Barrow. While Garrett dived and wheeled the R.E. to avoid the direct lines of fire from the attackers, Barrow kept a steady stream of lead from the after cockpit. The fight was uneven. The two old-fashioned observation planes were no match for the fast German scouts.

Suddenly, the English anti-aircraft artillery came to notice with a call for help. "Archie" shells bursting below him called Brown's attention to the plight of the Australian observation planes. Looking down, he saw them savagely engaged by the three or four "tripes."

A kick on the rudder turned Brown's Camel on its side and brought to his vision for the first time that morning, the eight of the enemy he was out to kill. Richthofen's swarm of Fokkers was diving on the same planes. Brown saw the hard-pressed Australians giving the best possible account of themselves, but he realized that they could hold out but a few minutes against the superior numbers and fighting strength then descending upon them like an avalanche.

While he watched the fight more than two miles below, his mind, trained to the mathematical formula of flying formations, quickly reviewed the situation.

His first duty was to get enemy planes, but equally important was it that he should exercise every precaution to get his men back safely. Up to this time, both of his records in these directions were clean. He had shot down more than his share of planes, and he had never

lost a member of his flight in enemy territory. He wanted to keep the record.

If he went to the assistance of the two Australian planes, he would be throwing his own formation into an uneven engagement, in which he was outnumbered more than two to one by the enemy organization that was the pick of the German air force. Brown knew Richthofen, his flyers, and his methods well enough to appreciate their fighting worth. If he did not go down into the *mêlée*, the observation planes would be lost.

His consideration of the problem was only momentary. He waggled the wings of his plane, the signal for the others to follow him. The next second, he pushed forward on the stick, stood the Camel on her nose, and dived straight for the combat, his plane splitting the air with the combined speed of a full-out motor and the acceleration of gravity.

Seven cherry-nosed Camels followed on the two-mile descent. There was neither opportunity nor necessity for orders to the others. All knew they were to drive the attacking Fokkers off the flanks of the hard-pressed R.E.'s who were still holding out by skill and luck. After that, it was to get as many of the enemy as possible and then get home.

This final objective was definite and specific. British air losses had been so severe that conservative orders had been issued to hold the remainder of the fighting air strength in being until new flyers could be trained.

Especially had these orders been given that day to one of Brown's men, who, like Richthofen's cousin in the opposing force, was a beginner. He was Lieutenant W. R. May, of Melbourne, Australia. This was the morning of his baptism of fire in the air. He acted under instructions that forbade him under any circumstances to enter a general dog-fight. Without the experience of those that flew with him, he would have been "easy meat" for an enemy plane, if not a collision menace to his comrades.

He had been told to keep out of the *mêlée*, to pick out a single isolated plane and put it down if he could; if not, then to play with it until he could break away, and then to streak for home. Pilots on their maiden flights had had the habit of trying to do too much, and too many had been lost.

With the wind screaming through every strut and bracing-wire, Brown pulled his phalanx out of the dive a bare thousand feet above

the Fokker engagement. The R.E.'s were still aloft, but now additional Fokkers and Albatrosses appeared, giving the planes of the Maltese cross a hurriedly estimated strength of twenty-two.

With guns roaring and motors wide open, the eight Camels plunged into the *mêlée*. There was no order of battle—only thirty racing engines of destruction rolling, diving, turning, circling, banking and firing bursts of bullets each time an opponent flashed across the sights of their guns.

The R.E.'s were saved—diving with all speed, they pulled out of the fight, leaving their assailants to deal with the new and more competent forces that now attacked them. In the *mêlée* that followed, all of the planes lost height and position and, in the grip of the east wind, the combat swung slowly back towards the actual ground-battle line, the contestants getting lower and lower each minute.

Infantrymen in both the British and German front-line trenches lifted their mud-stained faces toward the sky to watch this battle royal of the clouds.

On the great natural grand-stand of the Morlancourt Ridge, Australian "diggers" and gunners stood in their pits and watched the ferocious, quarterless tourney of death taking place hardly a thousand feet above their heads. So close were the planes together, so swiftly did the individual units of this flying cloud of human gnats dart in and out on trails of fire, that friend or foe could not always be distinguished from the ground.

Manfred von Richthofen was in the midst of the fight, and it was to be his last. He had led his Staffel to the attack over Hamel as soon as he had sighted the descent of Brown's cerise-nosed Camels on the assailants of the struggling R.E.'s.

Apart from us five, there was Staffel No. 5, not far from us over Sailly-le-Sec (Lieutenant Wolff explained three days later in a letter). Above us were more Sopwith Camels, seven in all, but they partly attacked No. 5 Staffel, and some remained high in the air.

One or two, however, came down on us. We started to fight immediately. During the fight, I saw the captain several times not far off but as yet I had seen him bring down no plane.

On our special group, only Lieutenant Karjus was with me. Scholz was fighting somewhere over Sailly-le-Sec, and Lieutenant von Richthofen was, as a beginner, not quite up to the affair.

While I and Karjus are fighting two or three Camels, I see that the captain's red machine is engaging a Camel which, apparently hit, drops down and then retreats to the west. This took place on the other side of Hamel.

We had a violent east wind, and most probably the captain had forgotten this fact. As soon as I had more freedom in the fight, I took good aim and brought down my Camel. While it was dashing down, I looked for the captain and spotted him in a very low height somewhere over the Somme and not far from Corbie. He was still pursuing the Camel.

I shook my head involuntarily and wondered why the captain was following a machine so far behind the enemy lines. Just as I am looking to see where my victim is going to crash on the ground, I hear machine-gun fire behind me. A new Camel is attacking me. He puts twenty holes into my plane.

After getting rid of him, I took for the captain, but the only one I can see is Karjus. It was then I felt the first forebodings of disaster, because I ought to have seen him, provided all had gone well. We flew in circles, were attacked once by an Englishman whom we chased as far as Corbie, but of the captain we saw nothing whatever. We returned, anxious and nervous.

Somewhere, indefinitely, in the dog-fight, Roy Brown had spent what he to-day considers the speediest and most exciting ten minutes of his life. Flying automatically, he concentrated on the triple problem of avoiding collision, putting his own bullets where they would count, and at the same time protecting himself and his plane from opponents equally intent upon doing the same thing to him. The synchronized Spandaus and Vickers spat twin streams of lead at one another every time a target whizzed by the speeding gun-sights.

Brown's men were also units in the dizzy whirl of the fight. Taylor sent an Albatross down in flames. Mackenzie knocked down a triplane out of control. A triplane with a blue tail took a death-dive earthward after receiving a full burst of lead from the guns of Lieutenant F. J. W. Mellersh.

Two more "tripes" fasten themselves on the tail of Mellersh's Camel and, to save himself from disaster, he spins down to within fifty feet of the ground, where he makes a forced landing, happily within his own lines.

May, the baby of the squadron, had been in the jam also. He had picked out his lone plane on the edge of the *mêlée*, and it had gone down in flames. Then he remembered his other orders, and started a long dive for home.

Brown, coming out of a death waltz with two Fokkers, saw May's departure. He wished him luck and turned his attention to his other planes, planning to stay with them, unless May got into trouble.

Trouble lit on young Mr. May immediately. It came out of the sky from above and behind. It came with terrific speed in the form of an all-red Fokker triplane.

In the single cockpit sat a young man who, during three years of war, had earned the title of death's ablest ambassador. It was his proud boast that any flyer that got below and in front of him was a "goner." That was the way he had killed one of England's greatest aces. That was the way he had shot down eighty planes: that was the way he had sent scores of men to death.

Richthofen was flying on May's tail. He had selected him for his next victim. It will never be known whether the Flying Uhlan recognized his selected prey as a beginner or not, but that is beside the case. In his string of victories, amateur victims counted just as much as a fallen master of the air. In the business of war one destroys as one can.

The nose of the all-red Fokker was within thirty yards of the fleeing Camel. May, looking over his shoulder, saw the approach of death. He saw the openwork air-cooling casings of the two Spandau barrels pointing down on him from above. Between the butt-ends of the machine-guns, the top of a leather helmeted head was just visible, down as far as a pair of dark glass goggles. This he could see through the blur of the invisible propeller. The eyes of Germany's deadliest marksman in the air peered through the glasses.

The open cockpit of May's Camel comes within the wire-crossed circle of Richthofen's sights. The pressure of a steady finger on the trigger—two jets of lead—short burst—spout from the gun-barrels. Bullets snap through the air close by May's ears. Splinters fly from the struts before him.

He is defenceless from the rear. He can only shoot forward. Richthofen keeps behind him. The young Australian resorts to every stunt he knows to get out of that deadly line of fire. He darts to one side—darts back—goes into a zig-zag course, but his pursuer seems able to foresee his every manoeuvre. Richthofen keeps the nose of the red Fokker trained on the body of the fuselage. The short bursts continue to rip out from the Spandaus.

May pulls on the stick—kicks over the rudder—pulls up hard—loops—side-slips, and turns in the opposite direction. He comes out of the evolution only to find the sputtering red-nosed Fokker still bearing down on him.

The speed of the pair is terrific. They are going down the wind with full motors and depressed planes. May is flying for life against an agent of death who has seldom failed before.

Roy Brown, from the height of 15,000 feet, has seen the frantic

efforts of his fledgling to extricate himself from the talons of the pursuing eagle. He noses the Camel down again at full speed towards the whirling duellists, who are now not more than two hundred feet off the ground.

Directly in front and beneath the pair are the trench positions and gun-pits of the Thirty-third Australian Field Battery of the Fifth Division. They are sited near the crest of the ridge, and the waiting gunners watch with bated breath the two whirling, twisting forms of Richthofen and his quarry.

May, still zig-zagging, makes for the crest of the ridge in a last desperate effort to land before those two streams of lead reach him. One bullet had already traversed his right arm. The pain is forgotten in the excitement of the moment.

The Australian gunners see that the leading machine is British and that the one behind is an all-red Fokker.

The machine-gunner on the nearer flank of the battery aims forward and upward at the writhing oncoming pair, but so close is Richthofen upon May's tail that the gunner dare not fire. The two planes are almost in line. Another Lewis gunner beyond the ridge sprays a stream of lead upward. His range is 100 yards. He sees splinters flying from the woodwork of the German plane.

But Brown has arrived at the end of his dive. He comes out of it slightly above and to the right of the darting Fokker. His last drum of ammunition is in place. His sights come to bear on the red machine. He pressed the trigger, and the ready Vickers speak in deadly unison.

He watches the tracer-bullets going to the red triplane from the right side. They hit the tail first. A slight pull on the stick—a fractional elevation of the Camel's nose, and the Canadian's line of fire starts to tuck a seam up the body of the Fokker.

Richthofen, with his spurting Spandaus still trained on May, is unaware of this new attack from the rear.

Brown sees his tracers penetrate the side of the Fokker cockpit.

The Fokker wavers in mid-air—falters—glides earthward.

The Red Knight of Germany goes down.

Mellersh, from the Australian line beyond which he has landed, has witnessed the escape of May, and now he hears the roar of Brown's motor as it swoops overhead less than a hundred feet off the ground.

The red Fokker hits the uneven ground, but rolls on an even keel. It loses one undercarriage wheel and comes to a stop right

side up in a shell-hole not fifty yards from where Mellersh is standing. It is on the outskirts of the ruined village of Sailly-le-See, not far from Corbie.

The terrain on which the triplane rests is open and exposed to fire from the German side. The Australians in the near-by shell-holes and gun-pits wait for the occupant of the plane to emerge. Telescopes in the German position a quarter of a mile away are also trained on the machine for the same purpose. But the occupant makes no effort to get out.

An Australian with a rope wriggles forward across the field, taking advantage of the protection of every shell-hole. Bullets from indirect machine-gun fire flip mud from the lips of the craters. He reaches the machine, attaches the line to the undercarriage and returns to his gun-pit by the same route.

Then, carefully, so as not to overturn the machine, it is drawn back to the shelter of a small rise in the ground. Mellersh and the gunners look into the cockpit.

The German pilot is sitting bolt upright in his seat, strapped to the back. His hands still hold the control stick between his knees. There is blood on that part of the face which shows below the strapped helmet and the broken goggles. Blood is coming from the mouth and the lower jaw sags. The man is dead.

The form is unstrapped from the seat and laid on the ground. From the pockets of the unknown are removed a gold watch and some papers carrying the name and rank of the bearer.

"My God, it's Richthofen!" exclaims Mellersh.

"They got the bloody baron!" an Australian in the group shouts over to the next trench. Men crawl forward to take a look at the body of the terror of the air.

Under Mellersh's instruction the body is carried with awed reverence to the nearest underground shelter, where a medical officer unfastens the bloodstained leather jacket and opens the red-wet blue-silk pyjama coat found underneath. There is a bullet-hole in both the right and the left breast.

